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# COMIC collector

APRIL 1992

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DRAWING THE SWORD

## CHRIS CLAREMONT
LIFE AFTER THE X-MEN

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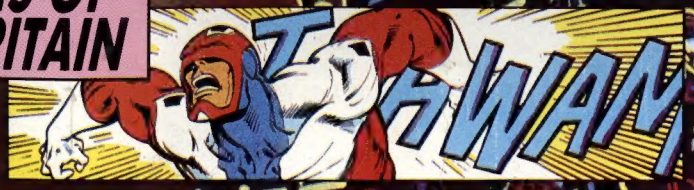


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DARK HORSE COMICS

INTERNATIONAL

# THERE IS A NEW HORSE IN TOWN

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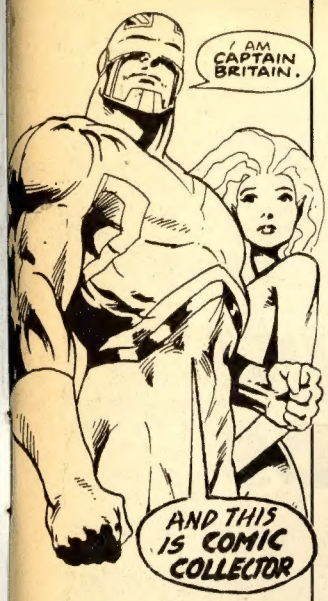


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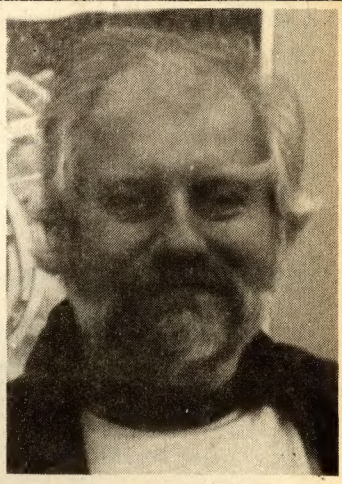


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*BECAUSE of the way the publishing game works, I'm writing this only a few days after our first issue has hit the news-stands, so we've only just started to hear your reactions to* Comic Collector. *So far we've had nothing but good news – I'm sure the invectives will come, but make it constructive criticism, please.*

*If anything, we're more proud of our second issue than our first baby. Look at the line-up: Chris Claremont, Alan Davis, the new Dredd Fortnightly, the new Marvel UK Universe, and an exclusive look at the new Batman titles coming your way in May and June.*

*Forgive me if I take a small break to thank some of the people who helped put this package together: Messrs. Chris Claremont and Alan Davis for their time and erudite conversation, Igor Goldkind and David Bishop for the illos. and information on the new Dredd Fortnightly, Paul Neary, John Freeman and Sophie Heath for their enthusiasm and help with our Genesis '92 preview; not forgetting Biff Beeson and the lads and lassies of ACE.*

*Watch out next month for a celebration of* 2000AD*'s 15 years of publication, more interviews, news, reviews and features. And a few surprises.*

*See you next month.*

# EX X-ARTISTS LIST GROWS: IMAGE UNIVERSE EXPANDS

The defection of creators from Marvel's best selling *X-Men* titles continues with the rumour that Jim lee and Whilce Portacio are following in the footsteps of Chris Claremont and Rob Liefeld.

Claremont, who left last October, has since been working for various companies, including DC and Dark Horse, as well as writing a series of novels and graphic novels for Bantam Books. Our interview with Claremont in this issue of *Comic Collector* reveals more of his future plans.

A number of artists, led by Rob Liefeld, are already strongly entrenched in the new Image Publishing imprint announced by Malibu Graphics which combines the forces of Liefeld, Todd McFarlane, Erik Larson and Jim Valentino, with other artists to follow.

Rob Liefeld only recently indicated that he would continue his work on *X-Force*, whose first issue shifted a staggering 4 million copies in various cover formats, eclipsing the previous best-seller (Todd McFarlane's *Spider-Man 1*) by over a million.

It now seems that the success of *Youngblood* – which received advance orders of 307,000, making it the biggest-selling creator-owned direct market independent comic of all time – has prompted his permanent departure from Marvel.

The original plans for *Youngblood* was for a 3-issue series followed by another team book, *Brigade*, and a further *Youngblood* mini-series, although Liefeld was quoted as saying: "If *Youngblood* is successful, I will have to seriously think about pursuing it on a full-time basis" (cf *Comics Scene 25*). Now, it would seem, he has made the move, putting other projects such as the planned *Cable* 4-issue mini-series for Marvel to one side.

The initial announcements for the Image line have indicated that the newly planned titles will be very much in the vein of long-established Marvel concepts, with young superheroes, vigilantes, teams, cross-overs and a shared universe.

At the time of the announcement of the new line Liefeld said: "Image Comics is a banner we created for each new book, showing our mutual support for each other. Not only do we get to share with fandom our finest creations, but we get to own them as well. What better incentive to do your best work. We've talked about working together in the past, now we're finally getting the chance to do it.

*Youngblood* will be the first title to carry the new Image logo, to be followed in May by Todd McFarlane's vigilante mini-series, *Spawn*. Unscheduled as yet are Erik Larsen's *The Dragon* (a one-man SWAT team, set in Chicago), Jim Valentino's new team, *The Pact*, and the aforementioned super-group from Rob Liefeld and Marat Mychael, *Brigade*. The Impact Universe titles will have a $1.95 cover price.

More big names who have agreed to contribute work for the new imprint include Dale Keown, Ken Steacy, George Perez and Tom Orzechowski.

The defection from Marvel, however, has not stopped with the likes of McFarlane and Liefeld, and it particularly affects the ever popular *X-Men* titles.

Jim Lee, whose contract expires in February, first worked on the *Uncanny X-Men* issue 248, and achieved a staggering success with *X-Men 1*, which has some 8.2 million copies in print. Whilce Portacio became a regular artist with issue 281 – although he had already had a brush with X-fame, inking John Romita Jr. on issue 201. Both are thought to be leaving their respective titles.

### WHAT NOW?

The question on everybody's lips now is, where does that leave Marvel? With their hottest artists moving on to creator-owned projects it may seem that the immediate future for some titles looks uncertain. However, Marvel's strength is in established characters and aggres-

# MARSHAL LAW MOVES TO DARK HORSE

**Pat Mills and Kevin O'Neill are producing *Marshal Law: Super Babylon* for Dark Horse, a 48–page one-shot scheduled to ship on May 12.**

***Marshal Law* has had a chequered career in the past, first appearing in a six-issue series published by Epic in 1987: Mills' hatred for the superhero genre was given full reigh in the series which launched a hero-hating Marshal against the Public Spirit – the embodiment of the clean-cut, all-American superhero. O'Neill's frenetic artwork complimented the story perfectly, and the success of the series led to a one-shot follow-up, *Marshal Law Takes Manhattan*, sending up various Marvel characters.**

**The Marshal reappeared from the British publishers Apocalypse, in the one-off *Kingdom of the Blind* and in the pages of *Toxic!* The story, 'The Hateful Dead' in the early issues of the latter has set the stage for the new story which Mills calls, "a homage to the Golden Age of superheroes. It's his grossest adventure yet." The cast includes the Black Scarab, Jesus Society of America, Blue Battery, Carrion Crow, Mary Miracle, Doc Weird and plenty of others.**

**The perfect bound, no ads special is intended for mature readers, priced $4.95. Pat Mills also told *Comic Collector* that Dark Horse may be taking other ex-*Toxic!* characters, with Accident Man being a likely revival in the future. Watch out for an interview in the near future.**

With the new Batman movie due for release on June 19, DC have a flurry of Batman related books shipping in May, chief amongst them the new ongoing *Batman: Shadow of the Bat* which will launch as a bi-weekly, and two prestige format books, *Catwoman Defiant* and *Penguin Triumphant*.

*Batman: Shadow of the Bat* is written by Alan Grant, with art by Norm Breyfogle and fully painted covers by Brian Stelfreeze. The Grant/Breyfogle team has already established itself in the pages of *Detective Comics* and *Batman*, but the move to a new title will allow them the opportunity to widen the scope of their tales whilst remain-

sive marketing, and their ability to find hot new talent is beyond doubt.

The next few months will certainly see a lot of reshuffling of creative teams – start laying your bets now as to who does what – but at the end of the day the titles will continue to sell solidly. True, sales of *Spider-Man* dropped when Todd McFarlane left, but the title is still a money-spinner under Erik Larsen, and will continue to be even if Larsen leaves.

As for the newly set up Image Comics, reactions have been mixed. Can Malibu recreate the successful marketing that made these artists hot in the first place?

The emphasis given bv the artists themselves is that the new strips will be essentially the same material as they've been doing at Marvel which begs the question: will fans be happy to pick up titles treading the same ground they have already trod in other, already established titles?

The third possible stumbling point could be with each creator-owned project sharing the same universe. If one artist wants to take his characters to another company, how will this affect continuity in other titles, especially as cross-over storylines and team-ups seem to be one of the main selling points?

It would seem that the Image Universe and the search for new *X-Men* creators is going to dominate the news for some time to come.

# BRITISH NEWS

## DARK HORSE OPENS

Dark Horse Comics, now recognised as the third largest comics publisher in the USA, have officially announced the opening of their London offices to handle European licensing and distribution, as well as taking on new projects for both the British and American markets.

The British company is to be called Dark Horse International, and will have a different logo to their American relative to differentiate the two lines and allow the company to develop its own identity.

In charge of the new company are managing director, Liliana Bolton, and editorial director, Michael Bennett, formerly editor of *Crisis* and *Xpresso*.

Liliana has said that she is excited by the possibilities the new company offers: "I am delighted to be with such a dynamic, fast growing company and pleased that Dark Horse has recognised the opportunities arising with the opening of the European market in 1992."

Michael Bennett has been snowed under with proposals for new projects: "We are talking to the cream of UK and European talent about publishing their creations," he says, "as well as working on popular characters such as Aliens, Predator and RoboCop.

"We have also been approached by Fleetway Editions to team up Britain's favourite comic character, Judge Dredd, with one of the Dark Horse characters mentioned above!"

## BOND ... IS BACK

***Ian Fleming's classic hero, James Bond, returns this summer in a three part mini-series from Acme Comics and the American Dark Horse Comics.***

***The series is entitled* James Bond 007: Serpent's Tooth *and is written by Doug Moench with art by Paul Gulacy. The two creators have worked together previously, most notably on the* Legends of the Dark Knight *story, 'Prey'.***

***The story pits Bond against a classic style Bond villain, Indigo, a mysterious, reptilian criminal mastermind responsible for kidnapping eminent scientists from all over the world.***

***He plans to alter the face of the Earth as we know it, and to replace it with a new Eden shaped in his own image.***

***Acme's editorial director, Dick Hansom, told* Comic Collector: *"Serpent's Tooth has all the elements of a classic Bond tale – deadly adventure, exotic locations, incredible***

*British News continues on page 18.*

# A SHADOW OVER GOTHAM

ing in the current Batman continuity.

In the first four bi-weekly issues, entitled 'The Last Arkham', Batman meets Jeremiah Arkham, the nephew of the mad Amadeus Arkham, founder of Arkham Asylum. The insanity in the Arkham family is hereditary it seems, and Jeremiah's plans for Gotham's madhouse include imprisoning Batman. The first issue of this new format title ships May 26, priced $1.50.

A special Collector's Set will also be available priced at $2.50. This will contain a copy of *Batman: Shadow of the Bat 1*, two 4-colour posters measuring 13" by 17" showing the Brian Stelfreeze painted covers for issues 1 and 2, a pop-up Arkham Asylum, a blueprint of the Asylum, and a die-cut *Shadow of the Bat* bookmark, all packed in a two-colour polybag.

Also presently on a bi-weekly schedule is *Legends of the Dark Knight*: issue 33 is part 2 of the 3-part 'Blades' by James Robinson and Tim Sale, shipping May 12, pitting Batman against the elusive serial killer, Mr Lime, and a new champion of Gotham, The Cavalier. The story concludes on May 26, with Batman wounded and forced into a dual to the death.

*The Batman Collection 1* is a slipcased collection of four trade paperbacks, shipping on May 19. Priced at $37.95 – a saving of $15.00 against buying the titles individually. The collection consists of *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* by Frank Miller, with Lynn Varley; *Batman: Year One* by Miller and David Mazzucchelli, with Varley; *Arkham Asylum* by Grant Morrison and Dave McKean, and *Catwoman: Her Sister's Keeper* by Mindy Newell, J. J. Birch and Michael Blair, with a cover by Briain Stelfreeze. The slipcase is stamped with the Batman logo.

Also shipping on May 19 is *Batman 481* by the new creative team of Doug Moench and Jim Aparo. Moench was the author of the recent Batman and Dracula hardback, *Red Rain*, whilst Aparo has been the regular artist on the title for some time with writers Mary Wolfman and Pete Milligan. The latest storyline is a two-parter entitled 'Messenger of Zeus', and concerns Maxie Zeus, still running his gang from the confines of Arkham Asylum. His mad assistant becomes the villainous Harpy and begins to wreak havok. The story concludes on June 2 in the pages of *Batman 482*.

Speaking of *Red Rain*, a $9.95 trade paperback version ships on June 2. This excellent Elseworlds story by Moench, artists Kelley Jones and Malcolm Jones III, and colourist Les Dorscheid, tells of the confrontation between Batman and the legendary Count Dracula.

*The Greatest Batman Stories Ever Told Volume 2* trade paperback reprints 18 tales, spotlighting the Catwoman and the Penguin, both prominently cast in the upcoming Batman movie. As well as reprinting the first appearances of both characters, the volume contains stories and artwork by Bob Kane, Dick Sprang, Dennis O'Neil, Dick Giordano, Steve Englehart, Terry Austin, Norm Breyfogle, and others, with an introduction written by Martin pasko. The 256-page volume ships on May 26, is priced $16.95 and has a painted cover by Breyfogle.

June 2 sees the publication of another collection, *Batman: Dark Knight Archives Volume 1*, which reprints the Golden Age *Batman 1–4*, including Bob Kane's retelling of the origin of Batman, Robin the Boy Wonder, Catwoman's first appearance and the subsequent debut of her costume, and the origin of the Joker. The 266-page hardcover is priced $39.95.

June 9 sees the release of *Batman: Gothic*, reprinting the Grant Morrison and Klaus Janson tale from *Legends of the Dark Knight 6–10*. The 128-page trade paperback has an introduction by F. Paul Wilson, and a new cover by Janson.

Two 48-page prestige format specials are also released June 9: *Catwoman Defiant* and *Penguin Triumphant*. *Catwoman Defiant* is written by Pete Milligan and drawn by Tom Grindberg and Dick Giordano, and features the Catwoman as a pawn in a trap to capture a Gotham City crime boss. Will Batman save "the beauty" before she is destroyed by the Beast? Meanwhile, *Penguin Triumphant*, written by John Ostrander and featuring the art of Joe Staton and Robin Smith, deals with the Penguin's attempts to become a legitimate Wall Street businessman, crushing Bruce Wayne in the process. The two books have painted covers by Brian Stelfreeze, designed to interconnect, and both have specially finished logos.

And finally, for this month, *Detective Comics Annual 5* is written by Alan Grant and John Wagner, with art by Mandrake and Magyar, and features the return of the Ventriloquist, helping the Joker escape from Arkham Asylum. To add to the problem, Commissioner Gordon becomes the victim of Eclipso in a cross-over into DC's latest summer epic.

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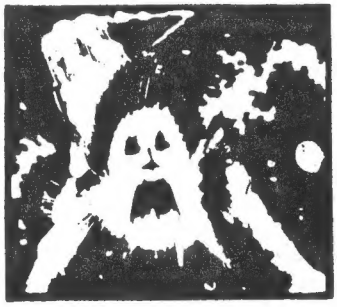

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# MARVEL NEWS

# PICKING UP THE GAUNTLET

Following the success of *Thanos Quest* and *Infinity Gauntlet*, Marvel have re-united writer Jim Starlin and artist Ron Lim for their latest crossover epic. *The Infinity War 1*, shipping April 28, sees the return of Thanos, Adam Warlock and the Infinity Watch for the six-issue, 48-page miniseries, but as allies against Warlock's old foe, Magus.

Starlin, the regular writer of *Warlock & the Infinity Watch*, and *Silver Surfer* artist Lim, with *X-Factor* inker Al Milgrom, provide a multi-crossover adventure featuring an army of 'shades' – twisted doubles of Earth's superheroes who can take over the minds and bodies of their counterparts putting the entire universe in peril.

Thanos, whose own attempt to destroy the universe was the central plot of the earlier series, inadvertently stumbles on the plans of the evil mastermind whose powers are almost the equal of the Infinity Gauntlet.

The threat leads to a series of strange alliances as Thanos teams up with Warlock to protect the universe. Galactus is impelled to team up with the Silver Surfer and Dr. Strange when he finds Eternity in an almost catatonic state. Meanwhile, Doctor Doom has teamed up with Kang the Conqueror to capture the source of power for their own ends.

As the threat approaches Earth, Reed (Mr. Fantastic) Richards marshals Earth's heroes to confront the deadly menace, but faced with the fear that any of the heroes may be a doppelganger, who can you trust?

*The Infinity War* will crossover into almost every title in the Marvel Universe, starting with *Dr. Strange 42*, which also ships April 28, eventually including appearances from the X-Men, Avengers, Daredevil, X-Factor, New Warriors and others.

# SILVER COVER FOR SILVER SABLE

*From the pages of* Amazing Spider-Man *comes Silver Sable, beginning her own monthly title, a 32-page first issue with a silver foil-stamped cover, shipping April 14.*

*Silver Sable and the Wild Pack are a group of international mercenaries who have included Paladin, Torpedo, Sandman and the Absorbing Man in their ranks in past adventures.*

*The new series opens with Sable's niece held hostage by a group of terrorists. Spider-Man guests in this opening shot from Marvel's latest Big Gun, brought to you by Gregory (*Deathlok*) Wright, Steven (*Badger*) Butler and Dan (*Legion of Night, Punisher*) Panosian.*

*Look out for the forthcoming* Infinity War *crossover issues which will develop a relationship that will continue through the series.*

*To celebrate Sable's new title, her first appearance in* Amazing Spider-Man 265 *is being reprinted with a new metallic-ink cover (a la* New Mutants 87*) for April 14 shipping.*

# UNEASY ALLIANCE: THE PUNISHER & CAPTAIN AMERICA

**Marvel's Big Guns promotions continue with the publication of *Blood and Glory*, a three-part, 48-page bookshelf format series featuring the Punisher and Captain America, both independently involved in a drugs-for-guns operation with links to the U.S. government and criminal fraternity.**

**The story begins with the Punisher in New York investigating the drugs, and Cap in Texas on the trail of the guns, but their paths soon cross – and Cap becomes the Punisher's next target.**

**Klaus Janson provides the artwork for the $4.95 title, written by Dan Chichester and Margaret Clark, shipping April 14.**

**April appears to be Marvel's Punisher month, as it sees a spate of reprints and new storylines:**

**• The regular Punisher title goes bi-weekly with a seven part 'Eurohit' storyline beginning in *Punisher 64*. Story and art are provided by Britain's own Dan Abnett & Andy Lanning (writers) and penciller Dougie Braithwaite, with inker Al Williamson. The $1.25 standard format title ships April 21.**

**• One week later, *Punisher Annual 5* ships, featuring Peter David's first full length Punisher tale, part 1 of 'The System Bytes' which will be continued in *Daredevil Annual 8*, *Wonder Man Annual 1* and *Guardians of the Galaxy Annual 2*.**

**David, whose work on *Incredible Hulk* and *X-Factor* has made him one of the hottest writers around, matches Punisher with a sentient computer virus, Ultra-Max.**

**• *Punisher: War Zone 4* sees Frank's cover blown with the Mafia. Chuck Dixon, John Romita Jr. and Klaus Janson provide rung 4 of the six-part 'Ladder of Death' storyline, shipping April 14.**

**• *Punisher War Journal 43* will be pencilled by *War Zone* artist John Romita Jr., and ships April 28.**

**• Available again: *Return to Big Nothing* by Steven Grant, Mike Zeck & John Beatty ships April 14 in both hard cover ($16.95) and soft cover ($12.95) formats. Also shipping the bookshelf reprint, *Child's Play*, the Daredevil/Punisher crossover from *Daredevil 182–184*, care of Frank Miller (story & pencils) and Klaus Janson (inks).**

**• *Cage 3* guest-stars the Punisher in a story that pitches Cage against a seven-foot police officer who calls himself Power-Man.**

**Marcus McLaurin, Dwayne Turner & Chris Ivy provide story and art for this Big Guns title, shipping April 7.**

# MARVEL ROUND-UP

Following the coverage of Northstar's homosexual revelations, Scott Lobdell, Pat Broderick & Bruce Patterson produce *Alpha Flight Special*.

This is Alpha Flight's 'Year One', revealing how the Canadian team came together and its evolution into the current line-up, and the team's first mission under the guest-leadership of Wolverine.

It will also be the last mission for one member.

The 48-page special ships on April 28 at $2.50. Alpha Flight will also be guest-starring in *Fantastic Four 365*, also shipping April 28, with the FF fighting the renegade Watcher Aron in Canada.

Shipping on April 7, *Captain America 401* is a post-*Operation: Galactic Storm* crossover story, with Cap questioning his ability to

*Moon Knight 39.*

lead the Avengers and being dumped by Diamondback in favour of Crossbones. Plus D-Man returns in this tale by Mark Gruenwald, Rick Levins & Danny Bulanadi.

*Conan and the Ravagers of Time* is a $9.95 graphic novel written by long-time Conan scribe, Roy Thomas and drawn by Mike Doherty & Alfredo Alcala. Red Sonja and King Kull both guest in a tale in which Rotath the sorcerer tries to trap Kull's body in that of a giant slug. Ships April 7.

Written by ex-cop Joe Jusko and Larry Hama, *Cops: The Job 1* is the first of a 4-part mini-series matching a veteran pro and a rookie cop against a serial killer who dismembers his victims. The art is provided by Mike Harris & Jimmy Palmiotti of *Punisher* fame. Shipping April 7.

*Daredevil 305* ships April 7, guest starring Spider-Man, and involves a team-up against inner-city villainy. Dan Chichester, Lee Weeks & Al Williamson provide story and art.

*Deathlok 12* reunites Deathlok with his human family. The first part of a four part arc entitled 'Biohazard Agenda', Nick Fury guests in this fight against a brain eating monstrosity. Dwayne McDuffie, Denys Cowan & Mike Manley also reveal more secrets about Deathlok's origin. Find out what on April 28.

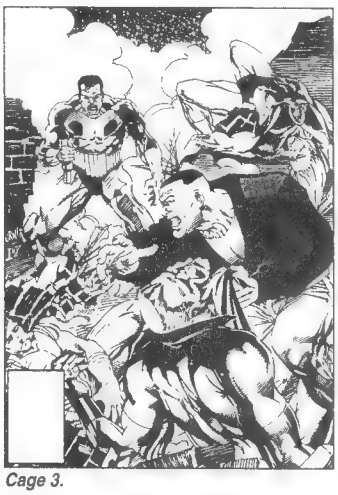
The fourth and final issue of the *Death's Head II* mini-series ships April 21 and co-stars an assortment of future heroes, including Wolverine, She-Hulk, Punisher, Spider-Man, Daredevil, and the Avengers! Dan Abnett, Liam Sharp & Andy Lanning bow out in style.

Doug Braithwaite is the guest penciller for *Excalibur 51* following Alan Davis' double-sized milestone issue last month, pitting Excalibur against a group of tourist dinosaurs who have been mutated by our pollution into giants. Ships April 21. A week earlier, the book-shelf format origin of the Excalibur team, 'The Sword is Drawn' sees its fourth printing.

*Ghost Rider 26* (shipping April 14) guest-stars the X-Men in a crossover with *X-Men 9* (April 21). Howard Mackie, Ron Wagner & Mike Witherby chart their first meeting as Ghost Rider travels to New Orleans during Mardi Gras to see if Blaze can rescue Dan.

*Guardians of the Galaxy 25* will be 48-pages and sports a laser foil cover. Written and pencilled by Jim Valentino with inks by Steve Montano, Galactus is heading for Earth, continuing the storyline featuring the 31st century Silver Surfer. This double-issue is priced $2.50 and ships April 14.

Andrew Wildman is the guest penciller of *Incredible Hulk 394*, shipping April 21, in which Atlanta is hunted by an enemy in



*Cage 3.*

the Antarctic. Only the Hulk can save her.

Moon Knight gets a new costume, a new headquarters and a new logo in *Moon Knight 39*, shipping April 28. Spector Mansion is blown to pieces, and Moon Knight relocates to a new high-tech HQ in Manhattan. A new arsenal and costume follow, as do a panel of experts known as the Shadow Cabinet who help Moon Knight in his fight for justice. The new MK is bought to you by Terry Kavanagh, Gary Kwapisz & Tom Palmer.

*Moon Knight: Divided We Fall* pits MK against his one-time confidant, Bushman, who brainwashes Frenchie and Marlene into assassinating the world's leaders. The 48-page bookshelf format one-off is written by Bruce Jones, drawn by Denys Cowan & Tom Palmer, and ships April 14.

*Motormouth 1* by Graham Marks, Gary Frank & Andy Lanning guest stars Nick Fury and features Harley Davis who travels across time and space with the aid of a pair of teleporting trainers! This title will not be available in the UK, as the story is to appear in Marvel UK's new fortnightly, previewed this issue.

*Nomad 2* is not for the squeamish, as Nomad helps an animal rights activist fight the Roadkill Club, who get their kicks running over defenceless animals tied to the road. Fabian Nicieza, S. Clarke Hawbaker & Mark McKenna provide story and art for this issue, shipping April 7.

A 336-page trade paperback collects together the 1984/85 *Secret Wars* series behind a new Mike Zeck cover. The series introduced the black Spider-Man costume, introduced the new Spider-Woman and villains Titania and Volcana, killed the Wasp and destroyed Cap America's shield, amongst other things. Shipping April 21, priced $19.95.

# SPIDER-MAN ANNIVERSARY SPECIALS

The 30th Anniversary celebrations get underway with a series of 48-page special editions. The first ships on April 28, *Spectacular Spider-Man 189* complete with gold-embossed cover behind which writer J. M. DeMatteis and artist Sal Buscema chronicle Spidey's final battle with Green Goblin.

Each of the specials also includes a bound in gatefold poster and recounts Spidey's origin through the eyes of different supporting characters. In *Spectacular 189* it's the turn of Aunt May.

Over the next five months look out for more Spider-specials and plenty of action in the regular titles: *Web of Spider-Man 89* (ships April 7) concludes the six-part 'Name of the Rose' storyline with Richard Fisk becoming the new Kingpin, and *Spider-Man 23* (ships April 21) features a gatefold cover by writer/artist Erik Larsen and the conclusion of the 6-part 'Revenge of the Sinister Six', with Ghost Rider, Solo, Deathlok, Hulk, Nova, and the Fantastic Four guesting.

Spider-Man also guests in *Silver Sable 1* and *Thor 448* this month

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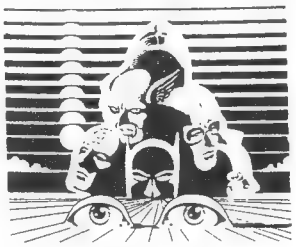

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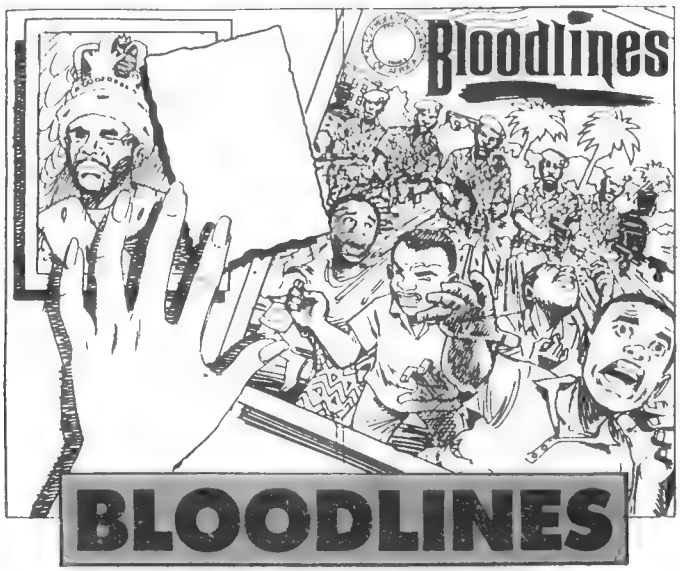


*Bloodlines: A Tale from the Heart of Africa* is the second Epic Special to concentrate on central Africa, and features Cathy Grant, a Peace Corps volunteer. Written by Cindy Goff, herself a former Peace Corps worker, and Rafael Nieves, the 48-page bookshelf story is drawn by Seitu Hayden, who drew the previous *Temporary Natives* volume. The fully painted cover is by Brian Stelfreeze.

*Hellraiser 13* includes three tales: 'The Ferryman' by Dean Schreck & Derek Yaniger in which a ferryman makes a pact for a chance of eternal riches: 'Dead Things Rot' by Dan Chichester, Mike Mignola & Mark Nelson has an unholy alliance between one of the thralls from hell and a serial killer: and 'Endolsung' by Larry Wachowski & Russ Heath concludes the first arc of the 'Devil's Brigade' saga wherein a reporter is the only person who can stop a South African country exploding into genocide. Ships April 7

Epic's romance with Clive Barker continues when *Nightbreed 14* ships on April 21, the final part of the 'Rawhead Rex' story by Dan Chichester. Dan Lawlis & John Rheaume. Will Peolquin chose to follow the Nightbreed or Rawhead Rex?

*Akira 37* is the last of the regular series, shipping April 14, and contains additional pages from creator Katsuhiro Otomo. A future Akira special will contain previously unseen promotional art and information, and Epic will shortly publish Otomo's *Farewell to Weapons.*

Hellraiser 13

# EPIC FROM EPIC

*Epic Illustrated* was one of the best magazines of the 1980's, a home for excellent stories and superb art by the likes of Barry Windsor-Smith, Howard Chaykin, John Bolton, Berni Wrightson, Vaughn Bode, and many others. Now, as part of Epic's 10th anniversary, the new *Epic* 4-issue series is a high quality anthology containing complete stories based on various Epic titles.

*Epic 1* ships April 14 and sports a Dave McKean cover. The 48-page bookshelf title features four stories: a *Hellraiser* story, 'Birth Right' by Dan Chichester and William Simpson; the first episode of the four-part 'Stalkers', written by Mark Verheiden and drawn by D'Israeli; a prologue to *Dreadlands* by Steve White & Andy Lanning (writers), Phil Gascoine & Kev Hopgood (art); and finally, a *Wild Cards* tale co-written by SF writer Lewis Shiner. Mike Collins & Kev Hopgood provide the art.

Future issues promise more 'Stalkers', more *Wild Cards* tales, a one-off *Alien Legion* by writer Chuck Dixon, the *Sleeze Brothers* and artwork by Ted McKeever, Doug Braithwaite, Arthur Suydam and Mark Farmer.

# DC NEWS

# A DARKNESS WITHIN

*After the success of last year's summer cross-over series,* Armageddon 2001, *DC launch* Eclipso: The Darkness Within *on May 19 with the publication of a 64-page standard format special, written by Keith Giffen and Robert Loren Fleming, and artwork by Bart Sears, Randy Elliott and Mark Pennington.*

Eclipso *will encompass 20 titles in all: two 'bookend' specials and 18 annuals (see chart). It begins when Eclipso, the banished god of Vengeance, discovers a way to manifest himself again, armed with a shattered black diamond – the Heart of Darkness – with which he can draw out the dark side in each of us.*

*The opening chapter in the saga involves Superman, Lar Gand (Valor) and the Creeper, as Eclipso makes his first moves in a game of universal domination through the hidden darkness in each of Earth's superheroes.*

*The special comes with a 3-dimensional faceted oval gem on the cover, made from deep purple plastic, representing the Heart of Darkness.*

*The story continues in* Superman: The Man of Steel Annual 1 *in which the action moves to Metropolis where Eclipso tries to neutralize Earth's defenders, Superman, Starman and Rampage. 64-pages, shipping May 26.*

*On June 2,* Green Lantern Annual 1 *sees Eclipso possess Guy Gardner and Carol Ferris, Hal Jordan's first love, who wants to see Hal dead. Hal may have his own vengeance fantasy released by Eclipso.*

*Commissioner Gordon discovers the madness inside himself in the pages of* Detective Comics Annual 5, *released June 9.*

**ECLIPSO: THE DARKNESS WITHIN CHECKLIST**

*Eclipso: The Darkness Within 1*
*Superman: The Man of Steel Annual 1*
*Green Lantern Annual 1*
*Detective Comics Annual 5*
*Superman Annual 5*
*Justice League of America Annual 6*
*The Demon Annual 1*
*Green Arrow Annual 5*
*Flash Annual 5*
*Action Comics Annual 4*
*Hawkworld Annual 3*
*Robin Annual 1*
*Deathstroke Annual 1*
*New Titans Annual 8*
*L.E.G.I.O.N. Annual 3*
*Justice League Europe Annual 3*
*Wonder Woman Annual 3*
*Batman Annual 16*
*Adventures of Superman Annual 3*
*Eclipso: The Darkness Within 2*

## GUY GARDNER REBORN

*Guy Gardner having lost the battle of the Green Lanterns in* Green Lantern 25 *must give up his power ring and quit the Green Lantern Corps But what do you do when you lose such immense power? Gerard Jones, Joe Staton and Joe Rubinstein explore some of the possibilities in the 3-issue prestige format series* Guy Gardner: Reborn, *48-pages and priced $4.95, the first issue shipping May 12.*

*Meanwhile, in* Green Lantern 26, *Hal returns as Earth's Green lantern for the first of a 3-parter entitled 'Evil Star Rising', shipping May 26*

*Also keep your eyes open for* Justice League Europe 40, *shipping June 2, in which Hal Jordan joins the team, leading them into a confrontation with the ancient evil of Cthon at the sight of an archaeological dig*

*Ch p wants to know why he was passed over when the new Geen Lantern Corps was formed, and heads to Oa where John Stewart is investigating a mystery Gerard Jones Cully Hamner & Dan Panosian reveal more in* Green Lantern: Mosaic 2, *shipping May 12.*

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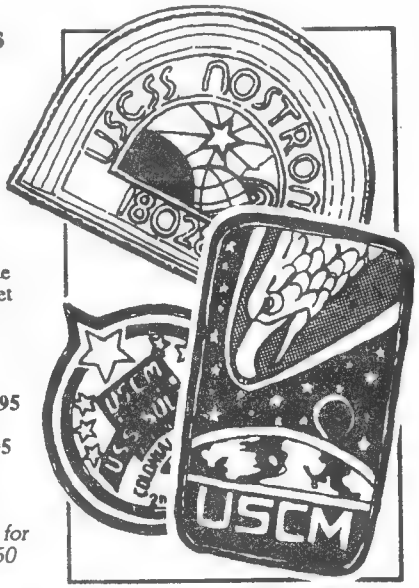


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# DC ROUND-UP

***All Star Archives Volume 1*** is a reprint of issues 4–6 of ***All Star Comics***, showcasing early adventures of the Justice Society of America. Characters include Flash, Green Lantern, Hawkman, Sandman, the Spectre, Doctor Fate, the Atom, and Hourman. Don Thomson of the ***Comic Buyers Guide*** provides the introduction for this 272-page hardcover, priced at $49.95 and shipping May 5.

***Animal Man 49*** leads into a special double-sized climax next month, wherein Animal Man must survive the final passage to his role as a true animal master. Tom Veitch's penultimate issue has Steve Dillon on art, a Brian Bolland cover, and ships May 26.

***Armageddon: Inferno 4*** is the final issue of the series: will the Justice Society of America return from Ragnarok to save the day? Find out on May 26.

An assassination attempt by a disciple of the NKVDemon, results in a roof-top chase in New York, and attracts the unwanted attentions of the Batman, who guests in ***Aquaman 8***, shipping May 19.

Philadelphia discovers its new hero in ***The Black Condor 2***, shipping May 26, but the subsequent publicity forces Condor's evil grandfather to escalate his actions to recapture his organisation's prized experiment.

The special prequel to Paramount's upcoming ***Cool World*** movie ends with ***Cool World 4***, shipping June 9, in which Frank Harris competes in a bizarre television game show to save the life of Nails the Spider, whilst the doodle mob battle for possession of the ultimate weapon.

***Deathstroke, the Terminator 12*** guest stars Superman, Aquaman, Green Lantern and the Flash in the follow-up to the events of ***Superman 68***. Captured and delivered into the hands of the C.I.A., Deathstroke stages a unique break-out; and a mysterious woman is out to recruit him into her global criminal organisation. Shipping May 12.

***The Demon*** gets a new team with issue 25, shipping May 19, with plots by Keith Giffen, and scripts by Robert Loren Fleming. Val Semeiks pencils and Robin Smith inks the story of Gideon Ryme, cursed by a pagan to walk the Earth at the time of the Black Death. 800 years later he's out for blood – Jason Blood!

The original Batman title, ***Detective Comics*** reaches its 646th issue, and the conclusion of the 3-part 'Electric City' tale by Dixon, Lyle and Hanna. Only one name remains on the hit-list following Galvan's killing spree: Commissioner Gordon. It's up to Batman and Robin to prevent his death, and expose the role of the Electrocutioner. Ships June 2.

***Doom Force Special 1*** is a 64-page one-off from Grant Morrison and an army of pencillers and inkers including Richard Case, Keith Giffen, Ken Steacy, and Steve Pugh. 'Judgement Day' is a self-contained lampoon of comic book themes, set one year from today. "Fighting misfits with fantastic powers and gorgeous bodies – and one will die!" we're told. Could they be the Doom Patrol of the future? Find out on June 9.

*Wonder Woman 64.*

The double-sized ***Doom Patrol 57*** sees the Chief explain the secret, true history of the Doom Patrol to a paralysed Cliff. The world's strangest heroes will never recover from the shocking climax dreamed up by Grant Morrison, Richard Case, and inkers Stan Woch & Mark McKenna. Shipping June 2, the whole 48-page package is wrapped up in a Simon Bisley cover.

It's Flash vs. Aquaman in ***Flash 66***, shipping May 12: when Flash is taken prisoner by the Marine Marauder, and the perfect rescuer, Aquaman, is in his enemies power.

***Green Arrow 64*** continues Green Arrow's and Black Canary's confrontation with the Japanese Yakuza in part 2 of 'The Hunt for the Red Dragon', shipping June 2.

Part 4 of 'Escape from Thanagar' sees rebel leader Katar Hol reveal his plans for a new constitution for ***Hawkworld***. Issue 24 ships May 12.

***Hellblazer 55*** concludes the 4-part 'Royal Blood' storyline by Garth Ennis & Will Simpson on May 19, in which John Constantine must perform the most dangerous exorcism of his life to rid London of the demon Calabrazis. Painted cover by Glenn Fabry.

Maxima fights for the survival of her home world, Almerac, in the May 19 shipping ***Justice League America 64***. Superman, Blue Beetle, Booster Gold, Fire, Ice and Bloodwynd combine forces to help her fight against Starbreaker.

A massive alien spaceship appears in nearby space, and the L.E.G.I.O.N. team are dispatched in ***L.E.G.I.O.N. '92 42***, written and pencilled by Barry Kitson with inks by Robin Smith. But why would Stealth want to protect the intruder? Find out on May 12. Two weeks later ***L.E.G.I.O.N. '92 43*** sees the return of Lobo to the group – he's had to bury his pet dolphin and he' in a mean mood as the L.E.G.I.O.N. intervene in a rebellion on the planet Yeltsin-Beta.

Element Lad, Jon Arrah's relationship with Shvaughn takes a strange twist in ***Legion of Superheroes 31*** as she reaches a turning point in her life – and changes gender! Colleen Doran is the guest penciller, and inker Al Gordon bows out with this issue, shipping May 19, which also features 4-pages pencilled by Curt Swan and inked by Karl Kesel.

The ***Legion of Superheroes Annual 3***, shipping May 12, contains two stories: the first follows up plotlines laid down in the 'Quiet Darkness' saga as Brin London becomes an all new, feral Timber Wolf and relocates to the 20th Century for new adventures in the forthcoming ***Timber Wolf*** mini-series. The backup story sees a massive reunion of Legionnaires, and a shocking secret is revealed about one of the founding members.

***Lobo's Back 3*** sees the reincarnated Lobo in the guise of Bimbo, but it doesn't last long because she's soon killed, and it looks like Lobo's next reincarnation will be as a higher life form – a squirrel. More nutty action from Keith Giffen, Alan Grant & Simon Bisley.

Ms. Tree's baby is kidnapped in the latest ***Ms. Tree Special 9***, shipping May 26, and she'll stop at nothing to get her child back.

***The New Titans 88*** serves as a prologue to a brand-new Titans title, which will debut next month. Troia's pregnancy threatens her life, and now another New Titan is revealed as a traitor! Ships May 19.

The Ray is in space trying to communicate with a sentient light being who is about to destroy the planet in the concluding sixth issue of ***The Ray***. Whether he succeeds or not you can find out on May 26.

The ***Run Riddler Run*** prestige format series reaches issue 2 on June 2, with Batman framed for a murder he did not commit. It looks as if he'll need the Riddler's help to prove his innocence. Gerard Jones writes, and Mark Badger provides the art for this three-parter.

The second 'Convergence' short story appears in ***Sandman 39***, shipping May 19, and set in the 12th Century. The young Marco Polo finds himself in the Gobi Desert with Kubla Kahn and the Sandman.

We come to the end of 'The Road', the 5-part storyline concluding in ***Shade the Changing Man 25***, written by Pete Milligan, with art by Chris Bachalo and Mark Pennington. Brendan McCarthy returns as regular cover artist with this issue, shipping May 12.

The 4-part 'Veritus' storyline concludes in ***Star Trek 33***. Will Kirk and the enterprise crew track down Uhura and Sulu on Beta before Colonel Gavok and his death squad find them? Find out on May 12.

***Star Trek: The Next Generation 33*** begins a bi-weekly schedule on May 19 with a 3-part story involving the return of the enigmatic Q who plays a practical joke on Picard during a diplomatic mission, with peculiar consequences. The diplomatic mess continues on June 2.

Superman meets Cerberus face to faces in ***Superman: The Man of Steel 13***, shipping May 12, whilst May 19 sees the start of a two part cross-over between ***Superman 69*** and ***Adventures of Superman 492*** (ships May 26) pitting Superman against Agent Liberty. Pete Ross is made to commit murder, and the story concludes with Agent Liberty destroying The Sons of Liberty. ***Action Comics 679*** (shipping June 2) sees the Special Crimes Unit with its hands full cleaning up aftrer the Sons of Liberty scandal, and Pete running for the Senate.

***Swamp Thing 121*** sees the return of the Sunderland Corporation in a story entitled 'Laissex les Bon Temps Rulers!' Nancy Collins, Scot Eaton & Kim Demulder plot the course of the new CEO's revenge on Swamp Thing. Ships May 26.

Wonder Woman finds out first had what it's like to investigate crime police style as she joins Inspector Ed Indelicato in the search for a kidnapped child. Brian Bolland provides the cover for ***Wonder Woman 64***, shipping May 12.

## IMPACT

***The Black Hood 7*** reveals the history of the founders of Seaside City in a bizarre nursery rhyme on May 12.

The Comet's costume floats empty in space after he has been disintegrated into nothingness. On June 9, Rob Connors finally finds out what happened to his missing parents, and the true nature of his powers in ***The Comet 3.***

***The Crusaders 3*** concludes their first case and the Kalathar saga, but what is to happen in the future? Find out on June 2.

Jaguar is forced to defend the life of a comedienne who has ridiculed her in ***The Jaguar 11***. Ships May 19.

A mysterious agent of the Web invades the Troy household to learn the connection between Jason Troy and ***The Fly*** in issue twelve, shipping June 2. It leads to an action packed confrontation, and a surprise when Jason realises who he has been fighting.

***The Legend of the Shield 12***, shipping May 26, sees the final showdown between Joe Higgins, the Shield, and General Higgins, his father.

Templar leads an assault on Web HQ to steal the group's treasure trove of technology. Bill Grady stands in his way in ***The Web 11***, shipping May 12.

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DC NEWS CONTINUES ▶

## ARION THE IMMORTAL – REBORN?

Once Lord of Atlantis, Arion the Immortal returns in his own 6-issue mini-series by Paul Kupperberg, Ron Wilson and Jerry Acerno. Since he lost his powers, Arion has lived in a tiny 13th floor room in New York's Carney Hall Building, making his living out of tourists, surrounded by memorabilia from happier times.

But his quiet and peaceful life is about to change: Darkworld sleeps, dreaming the Dream that gave birth to all magic. Arion finds his magic powers restored, but if his magic has returned, so must that of his evil brother, Garn, and that of the Lord of Chaos – a deli owner on New York's West Houston Street since he also lost his powers.

Issue 1 ships May 26 in standard format, priced $1.50.

## BRITISH NEWS – CONTINUED

***gadgetry, not to mention several beautiful Bond girls.***

***"Artist Paul Gulacy is having a field day bringing his inimitable style to a character he has always wanted to draw, and with him both pencilling and inking the series, he is producing the finest work of his career to date.***

***"Akira colourist, Steve Oliff, is providing state-of-the-art computer colouring to make this book a complete visual treat."***

***Serpent's Tooth will be a 48-page prestige format series, the first issue shipping on June 9.***

## FREAK O-OUT!

Hang on to your stash – the Freak Brothers are back in Freak Brothers #0

Knockabout Comics have collected together the best of Gilbert Shelton's 'lost' comix from the pages of rare underground titles like Hydrogen Bomb and Biochemical Warfare Funnies and Feds & Heds.

Stories saved from the cockroaches include 'Fat Freddy Gets the Clap', 'The Freaks Acquire a Groupie' and 'Craddock's Crusade'. The 28 page special is priced £1.99.

## CLASSICS REVISITED BY FLEETWAY

Two years ago, *Classics Action Special*, revived a number of 60s characters with some of the original teams. "It was a nice idea," says Fleetway editor, Alan McKenzie, "but it looked like a 20 year old comic."

The *2000AD Action Special*, published in early April, has taken the same idea but brought the characters into the 90s. The line-up will spark off a few memories for older collectors: The Spider appears care of Mark Miller and artists John Higgins and David Hine who provide 15 b/w pages of the *Lion* super-criminal created by Jerry Siegel: The Steel Claw, from the pages of *Valiant*, is written by ex-*Revolver* editor Peter Hogan and fully painted by artist Sean Phillips: also from the pages of *Valiant* comes Mytek the Mighty with the team of Si Spencer and Shakey Kane taking on the giant robot ape: the mysterious Cursitor Doom (from *Smash!*) is penned by John Tomlinson, with Jim Bakie on art: Doctor Sin was a character created for *Valiant*, but who made his only appearance in the 1979 *2000AD Annual*, now revived by John Smith and John Burns: and Kelly's Eye, another *Valiant* revival, comes from Alan McKenzie and Brett Ewins who recently pitched Tim Kelly alongside The Universal Soldier in *2000AD*.

A historical feature by Lew Stringer wraps up the 64 page line-up, itself wrapped up in a Brendan McCarthy cover

## OMAHA BENEFIT BOOK IN TWO VOLUMES

The overwhelming response from creators to the Reed Waller benefit book has meant that it will now be released in a two-issue series entitled Images of Omaha, both retailing at $3.95.

Reed Waller, creator of the popular Omaha the Cat Dancer, is currently undergoing intensive treatment for cancer. Proceeds from the book will go towards his living and related expenses.

Whilst the full line-up for each book has still to be determined, some of the many artists and writers committed to the project have been announced. The cover for the first issue is by Rich Larson & Steve Fastner, who recently drew posters of Marvel's Punisher and Incredible Hulk, whilst the back cover is the work of Concrete artist, Paul Chadwick.

Dave Sim & Gerhard will provide the cover for issue two, whilst the rear cover will be by pin-up artist Olivia. Other creators offering aid include Eightball artist, Dan Clowes, Howard Cruse, Will Eisner, Harlan Ellison, Phil Foglio, Neil Gaiman, Denis Kitchen, Terry Laban, Alan Moore, Larry Marder, Frank Miller, P. S. Mueller, Trina Robbins, Steve Rude, Arn Saba, Mark Schultz, Donald Simpson, Larry Welz and Al Williamson, with others to follow

## VALIANT/ VOYAGER

***Jim Shooter and Barry Windsor-Smith combine forces on Archer and Armstrong, a 32-pager featuring Armstrong, a ten-thousand year old reprobate, and Archer, a 20 year old who's come back from the dead with superhuman powers and a mission.***

***Together they're absolutely unstoppable . . . and totally miserable.***

## INNOVATION

**The *Lawnmower Man* is an 84-page graphic novel by Light, Immonen & Magyar adapting the New Line Cinema production of Stephen King's classic short story, directed by Brett Leonard. This futuristic thriller features a handyman who becomes all-powerful thanks to a covert government experiment which goes wrong.**

**The adaptation includes scenes that were were cut from the final version of the film. Priced $6.95, the book features a fully painted cover by Dave Dorman.**

## NOW COMICS

April sees the launch of *Sting of the Green Hornet*, a four-part monthly mini-series which reunites the original creative team, Ron Fortier and Jeff Butler. Set in 1941 as America becomes involved in the Second World War, the Green Hornet faces Colonel Gretchen Wagemuten, a German secret agent sent by the Nazis to undermine the US war effort. Priced $2.50. A limited collectors edition, priced $2.75, includes a 12" by 19" full-colour poster of Jeff Butler's painted cover, and comes polybagged with the comic.

The *Fright Night 3-D Special 1* is a 64-page spectacular written by Tom Caputo, pencilled by Neil Vokes and inked by David Mowry, and comes with free 3-D glasses. Priced $2.95.

*Ralph Snart Adventures 2* by Marc Hansen is released in four editions, each with a new Ralph Snart trading card that will be unavailable anywhere else. The title comes in two forms: the direct market edition is non-Code approved and has a special Hansen cover. The four editions will ship weekly throughout April. The second – news-stand – version will have a different cover and will ship in May with the four cards mixed at random

## ETERNITY COMICS

Eternity have pronounced May as Robotech month, and announced the publication of two Robotech titles which will debut that month.

*Robotech: Invid War* is a 4-issue mini-series written by Tim Eldred and drawn by Bill Spangler with painted covers by Robert Chang. The story is set in the days just before the Invid invasion, and sees the return of the Robotech Expeditionary Force hero, Colonel Jonathan Wolff, who tries to reunite the war-torn Earth in time to face the impending alien invasion.

The *Robotech II: The Sentinels Swimsuit Spectacular!* is a one-off 32-page full colour pin up special with art by Jason and John Waltrip, the regular artists of *Robotech II. The Sentinels* and *Robotech Genesis: The Legend of Zor*. The latter sees its third issue in May, following the adventures of Robotech inventor, Zor, in his journey to the planet Optera. The title comes complete with *Robotech: Genesis* trading card, sporting illustrations and technical facts.

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# DARK HORSE

*Eddie Campbell & Ed Hillyer's Eyeball Kid*

The book is wrapped in a Charles Burns cover, and ships April 7.

*Night of the living DEADLINE USA 1* revives the $9.95 American edition of Britain's *Deadline* magazine with a mixture of new and reprint stories at a more affordable $2.95.

The opening issue features Richard Sala's ultra-terrifying '13 O'Clock', Pete Milligan & Brett Ewins' hardboiled 'Johnny Nemo', 'Doe', by Harvey Award nominee Ho Che Anderson, Shakey Kane's intriguing 'A-Men' and further tales by Julie Hollings, Philip Bonds, Alec Stevens, D'Israeli and GWAR.

Mitch O'Connell provides a painted cover for the 48-page b&w no ads anthology which ships April 21.

The fourth and final *Tales of Ordinary Madness* is entitled 'Madness or Badness', written by Malcolm Bourne and illustrated by M. Dalton Allred, with a cover by John Bolton. The 32-page b&w ships April 21.

*Aliens: Hive 3* by Jerry Prosser & Kelley Jones sees Stan, Julie and Gill stranded on the hive world in the face of an oncoming storm. The only way to escape is through the Alien's hive! 32 pages coloured by Les Dorscheid, shipping April 21.

More science fiction film adventure can be found in *Star Wars: Dark Empire 3* in which Leia is tormented by visions of Luke being sucked into the darkness. Meanwhile, the war of Calamari erupts, Lando and Wedge take on the Imperial Stormtroopers, and Han has run into some old . . . friends?

Tom Veitch and Cam Kennedy provide 32 full colour pages, and a Dave Dorman painted cover wraps up the $2.95 bi-monthly issue, shipping April 21.

Frank Miller provides the penultimate chapter of 'Sin City' in *Dark Horse Presents 61*, with Marv seeking clues to Goldie's murder in the red light district of the city; in John Arcudi & Dale Eaglesham's 'The Creep', Oxel Karnhus' new gun proves necessary; Cliff Biggers & Brett Brooks (writers) and David Johnson (art) reveal that the gift given by the heroes of 'Earth Boys' also gives alien invaders the directions to Earth. Shipping April 7.

In *The Terminator: Hunters and killers 2*, shipping April 28, Soviet rebels discover a lost nuclear submarine with enough ICBMs to destroy Skynet as the battle between man and the deadly new Terminator threat reaches a crescendo.

Toren Smith, Bill Jaaska & Dan Panosian provide 32 pages, coloured by Joe Rosas behind a John Taylor Dismikes cover.

John Byrne reveals to the world the deadliness of the escapees from Project Next Men when a simple rescue becomes a violent bloodbath. The shadowy partner of Senator Hilltop is revealed as someone who will be familiar to readers of Byrne's *2112*.

*Next Men 3* ships April 21, 32 pages with colour by Matt Webb.

*Vampirella* concludes with issue 4 with the final showdown between vampi, Ethan Shroud and the forces of the Unseelie Congress. But it's not the end, because a *Vampirella Summer Special* is scheduled for July, and an ongoing monthly from September.

Chapter 4 of Moebius' 'The Man from the Ciguri' sees Major Grubert read a comic and order a glass of sparkling wine. Meanwhile, David Lynch's 'Angriest Dog in the World' still hasn't moved in the swiftly moving *Cheval Noir 29*. Chapter 6 of 'Tree-Heart' by Comes, 'The Flower and the Rifle' by Jacques Tardi and a new perspective on Paul Bunyon comes in the shape of 'Classics Desecrated' by Doug Wheeler, Doug Rice & Hilary Barta.

Shipping April 14, this issue features a cover by Peter Kuper.

*Wanda the Worm Woman by John Bolton.*

Readers of *Cheval Noir* may recall 'Rork' by Andreas. April 21 sees the first appearance in the US of Andreas' *Cromwell Stone*, a mystery told in 48 b&w pages and featuring an exclusively painted cover.

*Young Indiana Jones Chronicles 3* adapts a story from the ABC-TV series, and sees Indy teamed with Teddy Rossevelt in East Africa where the two are hunting specimens for the Smithsonian.

Dan Barry and Gray Morrow reveal whether Indy agrees with Roosevelt's views on animal conservation on April 14.

Ken Seno and the battered Hound Brigade launch a suicide mission to save the encampment of refugees in Yoshikazu Yasuhiko's *The Venus Wars 13*.

April 7 will show how Miranda's recklessness results in danger for herself, and Ken.

# EYES FRONT

Eddie Campbell's *Eyeball Kid* begins a 3-issue mini-series from Dark Horse, drawn by Ed Hillyer, pulling together all the now difficult to find stories.

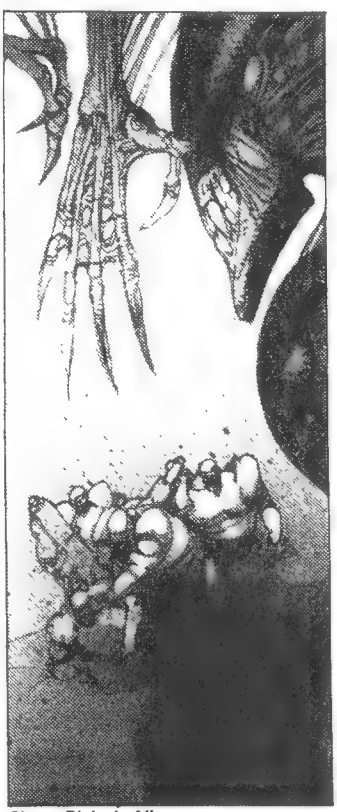
In the first issue, the Kid goes undercover working as a delivery boy for a local bookie. Since killing Zeus, the Kid has discovered that Zeus' thunderbolt is no longer working, and he has become the target of the Telchines, Hermes, and a host of others.

This issue also includes the original covers from the Harrier *Deadface* series with annotations by Campbell.

The 32 b&w page, $2.25 monthly features a new cover painting by Campbell and ships April 28.

Four Aliens tales from *Dark Horse Presents* are collected together and newly coloured by Rachelle Menashe and Chris Chalenor for *Dark Horse Presents: Aliens 1*, shipping April 14. The four stories are by Mark Verheiden & Mark A. Nelson, Anina Bennett & Paul Guinan, John Arcudi & Simon Bisley, and Arcudi, Guinan & Tony Akins, the 48-pages priced $4.95, and comes with a stunning new painted cover by Bisley.

*Residents: Freak Show* is an 80-page trade paperback anthology based on the popular 'Freak Show' LP by American group The Residents. The stories, some b&w, some colour, are all based on tracks from the record and include 'Herman the Human Mole' by Richard Sala, 'Wanda the Worm Woman' by John Bolton, 'Jello Jack' by Matt Howarth, 'Mickey the Mumbling Mimic' by Savage Pencil, 'Bounding Benny The Bump' by Pore No Graphics, 'Lillie' by Dave McKean, and 'Tex the Barker' by Kyle Baker.



*Simon Bisley's Aliens.*

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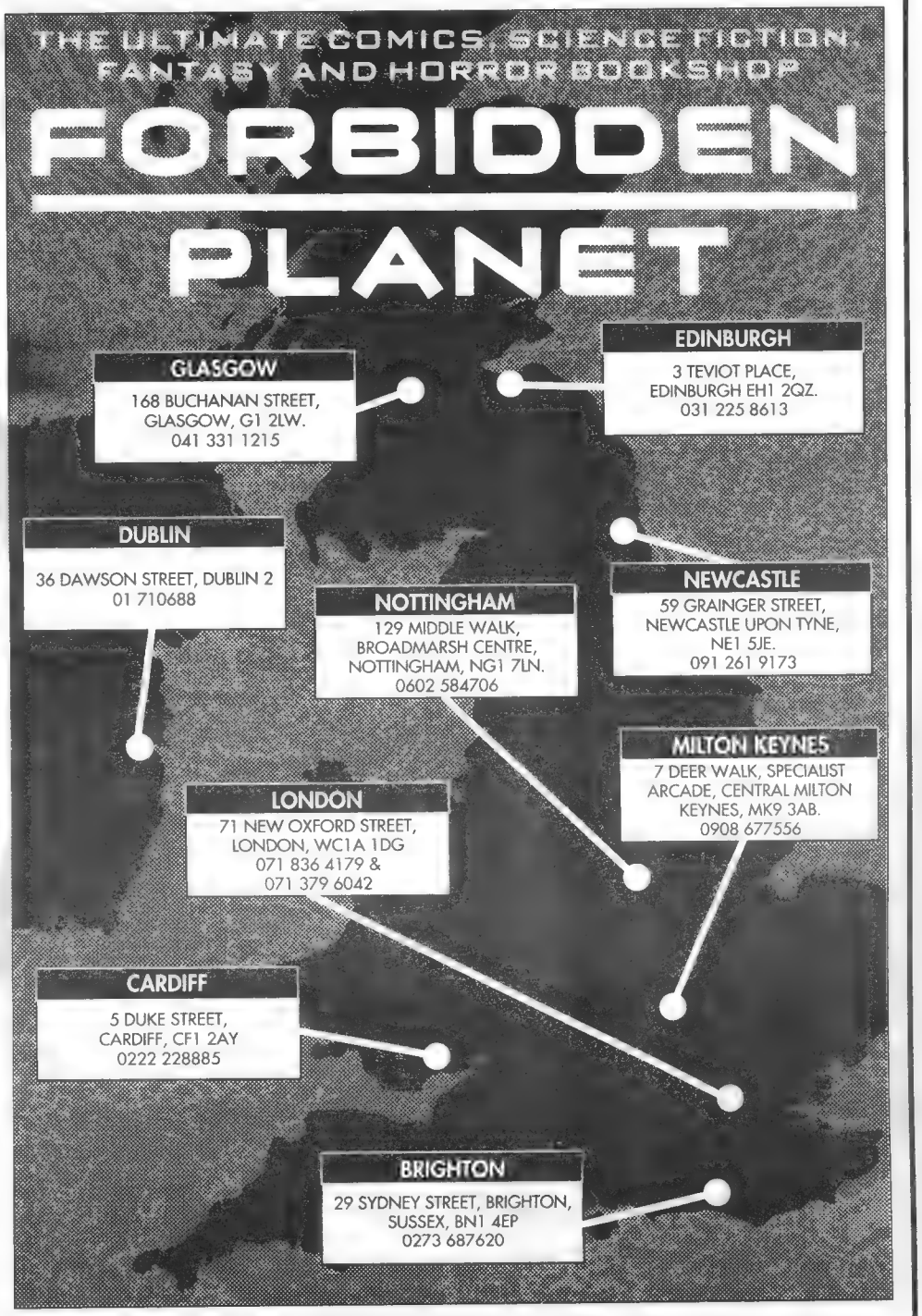
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# RIP OFF PRESS

**April Horrors *is an anthology of eight classic horror stories by Poe and Lovecraft adapted by Doug Wheeler. Artists include Kelley Jones, Mike Hoffman, David Gatzmer, John K. Snyder, Jim Reddington, Steve Bissette, Simon Bisley, Chris Bachalo and Bernie Mireault. This horror and humour 28-page, black & white collection is priced £2.95.***

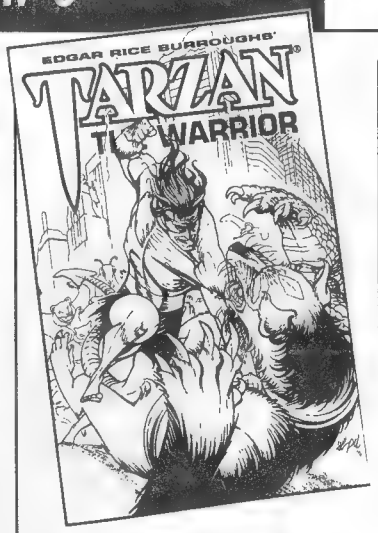
# ECLIPSE

*'The Silver Age', Book 5 of the Miracleman saga, begins in* Miracleman 23 *by Neil Gaiman and Mark Buckingham. The new 6-issue series begins 25 years on from the events of 'The Golden Age', and Dickie Dauntless – Young Miracleman – has been revived, but has to come to terms with the new world.*

*Meanwhile, Winter and the other Miraclebabies play an Earth-shaking super-hero battle on their island playground. The new series features covers by Barry Windsor-Smith priced $2.50.*

Miracleman Book 4: The Golden Age *reprints* Miracleman 17–22 *as a $32.95 144-page hardcover, introduced by Alan Moore and with a new cover painting by Mark Buckingham.*

Metaphisique 1 *is the first of a 2-issue series written and drawn by* Batman *artist Norm Breyfogle, featuring a variety of stories introduced by the musclebound host, Metaphisique. 32-pages, priced $2.50.*




# MALIBU COMICS

Tarzan the Warrior *reaches the second of five issues written by Marc Wheatley and drawn by Neil Vokes and Marc Hempel and finds Tarzan, Jane and Wom cha trapped by a dimensional rift and under assault from both old and new technology. 'The Lost City of Baltimore' is coloured by Damon* (Aliens) *Willis and has a cover by Hempel.*

Youngblood 3 *concludes the first mini-series from Rob Liefeld (co-written with Hank Kanalz) in April, but marks the beginning of many more projects from Malibu in the new Image Universe. See our main news spread for more information*

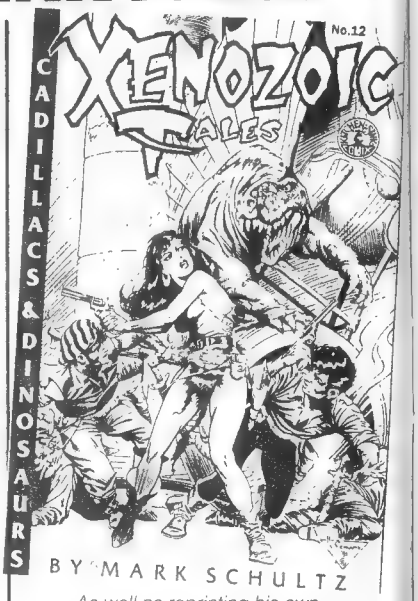
# KITCHEN SINK PRESS

Xenozoic Tales *returns in April, with an upgraded format and a new sub-title*

*Issue 12 of the excellent series by Mark Schultz is released in April, picking up the story of Jack Tenric and Hannah Dundee's trek to Hanna's land of the Wassoon, having set out from the City in the Sea in issue 11. Their arrival in Wassoon is only the beginning of their troubles, as Hanna is forced to bow to the political machinations of her bosses, and Jack is duped into leading an army on the City in the Sea.*

*The upgrading involves a better paper stock and a stiff coated cover, whilst Kitchen Sink have now reached an agreement with General Motors allowing them to use the title Cadillacs & Dinosaurs for merchandising tie-ins, planned to appear in late 1992*

Hypnotic Tales *is an 80-page collection of stories by Richard Sala, whose work has regularly appeared in the likes of* RAW, Taboo, Escape, Twist *and* Drawn and Quarterly, *as well as illustrations for magazines and the* Invisible Hands *animated series for MTV*




*As well as reprinting his own personal favourite stories, the $8.95 trade paperback also contains two new stories. A 250 copy signed, limited edition hardcover is also released in April, priced $29.95*

# MONSTER COMICS

Tod Browning's classic 1932 film, *Freaks*, was banned in England for nearly 30 years, and so shocked audiences in America that people literally ran screaming from the theatre. 60 years later it has been adapted into a 32-page, 4-issue mini series by Jim Woodring and F. Solano Lopez, a tale of lust, deception, revenge and honour among the performers in a travelling circus. The series features covers by Sam Keith. Priced $2.50.

Another film adaptation is *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* which begins a three-issue mini-series in April, based on Robert Weiner's 1919 film. Adapted by Ian Carney and illustrated by Mike Hoffman, the 24-page b&w is priced $2.25.

# TUNDRA PUBLISHING

April sees the release of Zombie War 1, *a two issue series published in association with Fantaco, featuring 32-pages of black & white story by Kevin Eastman & Tom Skulan and art by Eric Talbot.*

*The bloody story involves an Alien revenge: the dead soldiers of the world are reanimated, turning them into an army of zombies intent on the destruction of the human race. The first issue includes a wraparound cover by Talbot, and is priced $3.50*

*The Flarks are completely out of control. Super-weapons are unleashed. It can only be* The Jam 4, *continuing Berni Mireault's tongue-in-cheek spoof of costumed heroes, now in full colour, priced $2.95*

Madman 2 *contains more super-heroics as the Madman's Duncan yo-yo is put to test. Will he find a body for Dr. Flem's disembodied head? Will Mr. Monstadt rule the world now that he has the secrets of life and death? All will be revealed in April in Michael Dalton Allred's three-issue two-colour squarebound series.*

# FANTA-GRAPHICS

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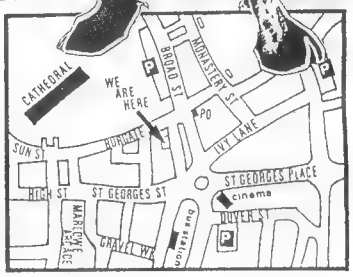


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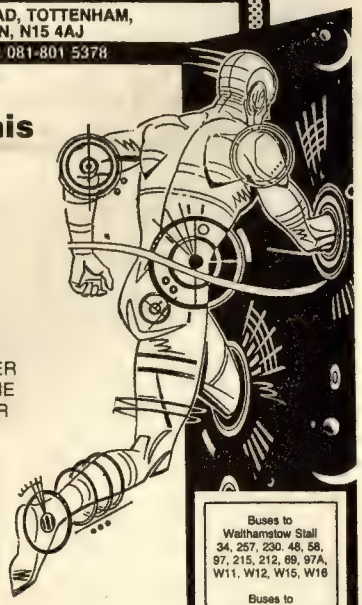

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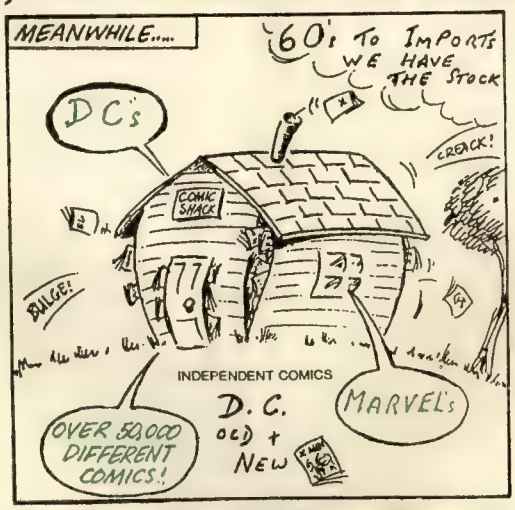


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# NEVER SAY NEVER...

## ALAN WOOLLCOMBE TRACKED DOWN CHRIS CLAREMONT AT THE ANGOULEME FESTIVAL AND DISCOVERS THERE IS LIFE AFTER THE X-MEN

Photo by Alan Woollcombe

*As a breed, comics writers labour in relative obscurity compared to comic artists: for all the big-names the comic reading public can identify, a bare handful of scribes can command anywhere near the same degree of recognition.*

Chris Claremont is an amiable bear of a man: he deals with fans and journalists with polished ease. He knows what his readers like, and delivers. Nonetheless, it is apparent from the start that, whatever else the future holds for him, it isn't the X-Men.

So was *X-Men 3* really his last hurrah for the mutants? "Yes. As Sean Connery said about returning to his role as James Bond, never say never, but at this stage it's highly unlikely that I'll be doing anything for the X-Men office in the near future."

How come?

"Well, Bob Harras [X-Men editor] and I had an increasingly divergent view of the book and the characters and the direction that it should take. Marvel as a company has been changing in significant ways over the last few years – the line as a whole has become more tightly interwoven with crossovers, guest appearances and seasonal events like *Atlantis Attacks* and *Extermination Agenda*. It means that books need to be far more tightly coordinated than they ever were before, and the editor has become the person who defines more and more the tone and direction and structure of the book."

Artistic freedom for the writer versus commercial dictates, in other words?

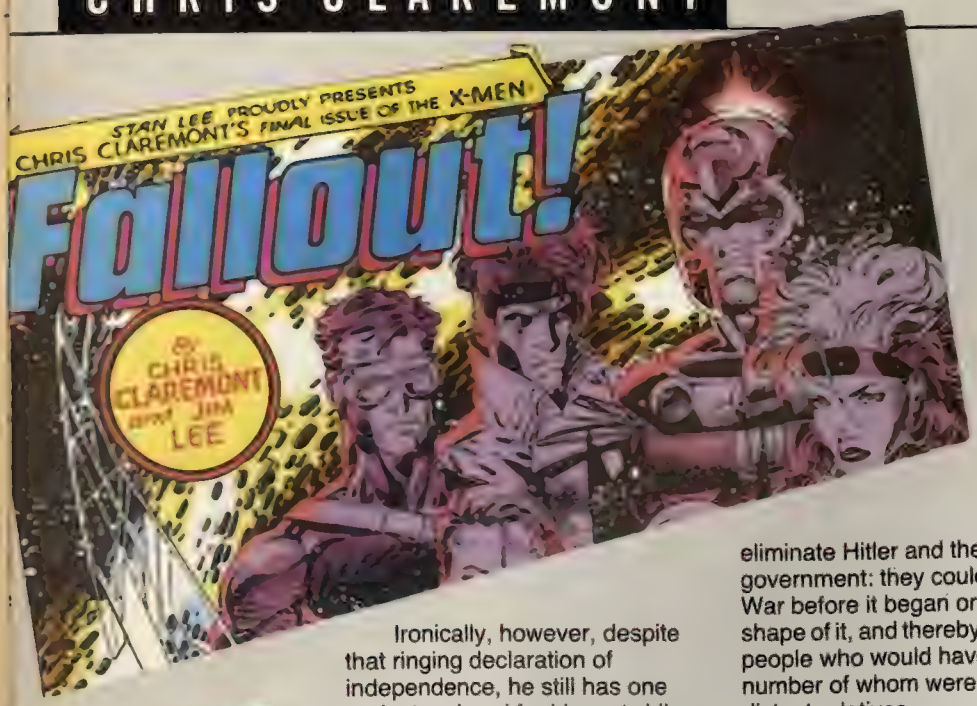
"Yes. I felt I couldn't do the stories I wanted and Bob, I think, was more comfortable working with Jim Lee [X-Men artist] as an editor and plotter than with myself. I just had less and less interest in that kind of working situation and I don't think any of us saw it getting better. My decision to leave was because at that point I saw no reason to stay."

© Chris Claremont & John Bolton

*Marada the She-Wolf by Claremont & John Bolton, from* Epic Illustrated *23*

### THE NEAREST THING MARVEL AMERICA HAS TO BRITISH SUPER-DOERS

Having abdicated from his mutant empire, Claremont has found little to tie him to Marvel: "I've done pretty much everything I wanted to do for Marvel in terms of characters. The thing that held me to them was the X-Men. Without the X-Men, Marvel is just one of half a dozen or more comic companies."




Ironically, however, despite that ringing declaration of independence, he still has one project on hand for his erstwhile employers – and, yes, it features some of his old mutant creations: Excalibur.

Excalibur has long been the most atypical of Claremont's books: for starters, the defining characteristic of the team has not been that they are mutants (Marvel's equivalent of racial outcasts) but that they are the nearest thing Marvel America has to British super-doers. Drawn, and now written, by British co-creator Alan Davis, Excalibur is the least mutant-oriented of all the X-titles and stands apart from the rest of the Marvel fictional universe. How come, after all he has said, Claremont is prepared to do one final story featuring this semi-detached band?

"It's a graphic novel called *True Friends*. I've been working on it for about two years now with Rick Leonardi and Al Williamson. It's about 48 pages pencilled and inked out of a total of what looks to be about 115, but it's on hold until we get a contract."

Claremont though is not on hold, as he launches into a description of the plot with evident enthusiasm:

"The Excalibur team range in time from the present day to 1936 – basically, Kitty Pride and Rachel get transported back to 1936 and get wrapped up in the abdication of Edward VIII and various Nazi shenanigans. It relates to some X-Men continuity, it relates to history, and it's just a cracking good story. The moral question that Kitty faces is that she and Excalibur have the power to eliminate Hitler and the Nazi government: they could stop the War before it began or change the shape of it, and thereby save all the people who would have died, a number of whom were Kitty's distant relatives.

"The problem is, if you change the past, you also change the future, and how do you know what ramifications these acts will have? So, is your obligation to the six million who will die in the Holocaust and the thirty or forty million who will die around the world as a result of World War II, or to those who live 50 years after the War?"

WITHOUT THE X-MEN MARVEL IS JUST ONE OF HALF A DOZEN OR MORE COMIC COMPANIES

X-Men © Marvel Entertainments Group

## Boldly going

Claremont, however, has several other irons in the fire, the first of which is a Star Trek 25th anniversary graphic novel drawn by Adam (*Justice League*) Hughes, due out in June, in time for the video of the current Star Trek film. Once again the storyteller in him takes over:

"Basically, the story runs the gamut of Kirk's career in Star Fleet from his days as a young lieutenant to just prior to the new movie, *Star Trek VI*. It explores his relationship with his crew, with the Klingons and the Romulans, all within the context of a threat that spans his entire career, a threat to the federation that only he and a couple of other people know about, because they're the only ones to have ever encountered it and survived.

"It's about how he deals with the threat, what makes Kirk Kirk, what makes the Enterprise crew special and what makes the series great. I guess my way of thinking of it is that if I were ever to write my one Star Trek novel, my one Star

*From Claremont's forthcoming Star Trek story, Debt of Honour*

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*Claremont's excursions into text both feature Lieutenant Nicole Shea, with a third title due next year*

Trek story, my one Star Trek movie, this would be it.

"My ambition was to do a story that the cast members themselves would read and think 'This is great! I wish they would film it and I could be in the story'."

Several announcements over the festival tannoy interrupt the flow. It turns out Claremont has other projects that he doesn't much want to talk about – a Superman Special edition with Michael Golden, which he has been working on for three years ("Gorgeous, glorious stuff, and it's a good story"); a possible three issue Wonder Woman Elseworlds story ("depending on contracts"), and an unnamed proposal in at Dark Horse. Mention of Dark Horse, however, leads him on to a project he does want to talk about: his own character, Renegade.

"I'm creating the character for Dark Horse in two science fiction stories, two eight page shorts drawn by Vince (*Haywire*) Giarrano for one of Dark Horse's anthology magazines – *Dark Horse Presents* or *Dark Horse Comics*. Then I'll be taking that character and using her in an Alien-Predator twelve issue limited series which goes under the working title of *The Deadliest of the Species*. It's a human/alien/predator team-up – a human woman, an alien queen and a predator female. It'll be the good, the bad and the ugly: three beings you wouldn't think would have anything in common teaming up against a common foe for a common good.

"That'll be fun, and once that's done, Renegade will move on to her series."

## Booked up

But this is all small beer compared to Claremont's career as a book author. His second text novel, *Grounded*, was released by Pan Books (Ace Books in the US) last September and his third one, *Sundowner*, is due out next year. He is also adapting the first of the trilogy, called (appropriately enough) *First Flight*, into a three-part limited series for DC.

His biggest project, however, is a deal with Bantam Books for one novel, two illustrated science fiction novels, and two Marada the She-Wolf graphic novels involving British artist John Bolton.

Claremont and Bolton have long been admirers of each other's work and have collaborated several times, notably on their *Black Dragon* series for Marvel's Epic Comics line, and on the non-reprint material in the (mainly reprint) *Classic X-Men*, as well as on Marada for Epic.

Claremont explains: "The first Marada novel will be a reprint of all the original material, which hasn't ever been brought together in one volume.

"But since that's only 100 pages of the 128, I will also be writing a prose novella for it, which John will illustrate with nine or ten colour plates. So, about a third of the book will be brand new, and the whole thing will be a nicely designed package.

"Then a year later we will be following it up with a totally original book: 100 pages of comic by myself and John, and another novella he'll do plates for."

In addition, Bolton will be providing about a dozen oil plates for the one non-graphic novel in the Bantam deal, a rock fantasy.

More festival announcements cause Claremont to pause and take a reflective sip of his Coke before launching into an enthusiastic precis of his final two graphic novels for Bantam:

"Essentially, it's a two-volume science fiction story. Each one will be self-contained, but they will copmprise one extended story. It starts in Britain in 1899. I've given Edward VII [Prince of Wales at that point] two more kids, but because the son who will become George V has kids of his own, my prince is superfluous and goes off looking for something to do.

*The series Claremont was most associated with during the 1980s* – The Uncanny X-Men

"In a nutshell, he runs afoul of some aliens, who are part of a consortium that want to stripmine the planet. The prince and other characters end up having to stop them.

"It's a story dealing in part with colonial exploitation – it's just that the people who normally think of themselves as the colonialists are now the people who are being colonized. It leaves, hopefully, our characters with a much more enlightened sense of their own place in the world. Part of the reason, in fact, that I'm here at the festival is to talk to possible artists."

All very impressive, but does all this book writing herald his eventual departure from mainstream superheroes or even the comics field in general?

Claremont's answer is precise and practised: "I consider myself a storyteller. I enjoy telling stories, in whatever genre, but at this stage of my career, I'd like to do stuff that's mine, that I own, and that I have a certain degree of influence over. Other than that, if I have a story, I'll tell it."

You can't say fairer than that.

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# EDITOR STEVE HOLLAND SPENDS A BLISSFUL FOUR DAYS IN THE COMIC-BOOK CAPITAL OF EUROPE

# POSTCARD FRO

***Angouleme, however, is in France's wine-growing region, and following road signs is like looking down a price list in a well stocked off-licence. We arrive at the station to be greeted by banners and adverts for the Salon International de la Bande Dessinee, and that's why we're here – comics, pure and simple, complex and stimulating, beautiful and expressive; France has an appreciation of art in all its forms and the treatment given to comics is as an artform rather than a simple entertainment for children.***

*This is the biggest get-together of comics professionals in the world, publishers, creators, retailers, and fans – 100,000 people will visit the festival over its five days. This is the 19th festival, organised on a massive scale to those of us more used to the two-day whirlwind of the UK Comic Art Convention.*

*Backing comes from France's Ministry of Culture, and from the sponsorship of local commercial enterprises, particularly Leclerc Supermarkets, who stepped in to save the festival in 1991 as rivalry grew for the prestige position of bandes dessinee centre of France.*

*Perhaps Angouleme isn't the biggest tourist centre of France, but nobody could deny it has just the right mix of attractive historical architecture and modern facilities, a town big enough to cater for all tastes in excitement, but rural enough to have delightful unspoiled countryside within 15 minutes drive.*

*It's difficult to know whether the locals are as friendly as they seem or just resigned to five days of strangers armed with maps. Every question begins with "Parlez vous anglais?", a broad smile and a meaningless gesture, and even after four days we still end each slow, stumbling, arm-waving sentence with "thankyoumerci", a word invented by the British to prove that the conversation is over, we think we understand, we hope you understand – swap smiles and everything will work out fine. It's only BD, after all, and we'll all be gone by Monday.*

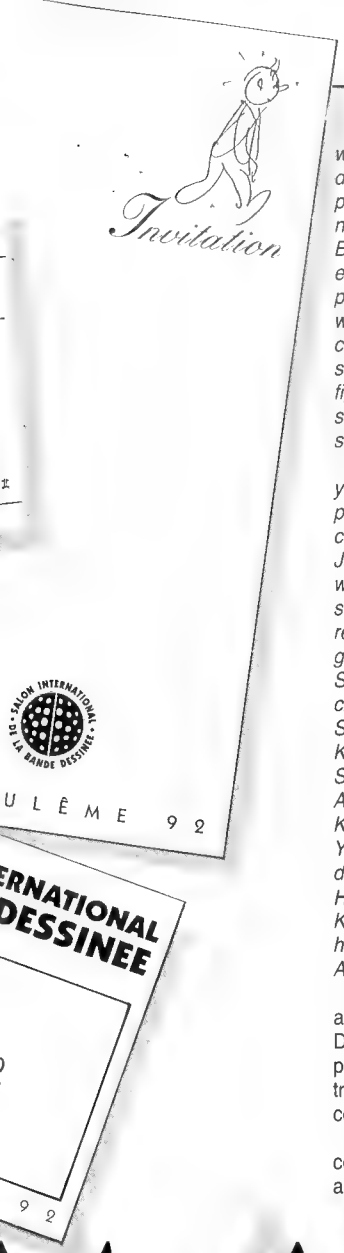
## BANNED DESSINEE

*The adrenalin kicks in on Wednesday afternoon when we reach the accreditation point to register our arrival, receive our information packs and the all-important Presse badge. Pierre Publique is not allowed into the trade areas during the first few days, allowing old friends to meet up in relative peace, exchange gossip about hotels and exhibitions and maybe do a little shopping.*

*With over 150 publishers stands to visit the variety of books and magazines on display seems to be endless. Each day a steady stream of school-children crocodile through the tents, adding to the babble of voices, passing 'big-name' guests without the slightest flicker of recognition, unmoved by displays that, in England, wouldn't have passed the first prudish customs officer it appeared before.*

*The three publishers' buildings are only part of the festival: dotted around the town are galleries in the 12th century Cathedrale Saint-Pierre, the post-office, the local Chamber of Commerce – everywhere you look there are exhibitions, theatre, concerts and talks.*

*It's impossible to visit each and every one, although a few high-points included the Wednesday night exhibition by Marcel Gotlib – last years Angouleme prize winner and President d'Honneur this year – whose work was displayed in what the designers described as 'EuroGotlibland': a 'three-dimensional tribute' involving video, music, automata and a lot of packing cases.*




# M ANGOULEME

*The exhibition of Alberto Breccia, with over 80 pages of original work on display, two video studies, sketches and prints, was a little more regular, but nonetheless attractive, not least for Breccia's incredible fluid style. To pick one exhibition seems almost to be a sin, but possibly the most impressive display of all were the paintings and illustrations of children aged between 8 and 15. They showed more understanding of figurework, perspective, structure, storytelling and colour sense than, dare I say, many professionals in the business.*

*The festival changed format some years ago, from taking a theme for a particular year to giving a country the chance to present itself. Spain, Britain and Japan have had their year, and this year was the turn of America. There was a strong presence in the shape of representatives from publishers and guest artists ranging from Why I Hate Saturn artist Kyle Baker to Simpson's creator Matt Groening,' from the classic Sergeant Rock adventure art of Joe Kubert to the avant-garde work of Art Spiegelman, of Maus fame. Sergio (Groo) Aragones, Chester (Yummy Fur) Brown, Kevin (Turtles) Eastman, Dave (Batman: Year 1) Mazzuchelli, and not forgetting displays from Marvel, D.C., Tundra, Dark Horse, Fantagraphics, Now, Mirage, Kitchen Sink, and so many others, all helped to push the vigorous spirit of American comics.*

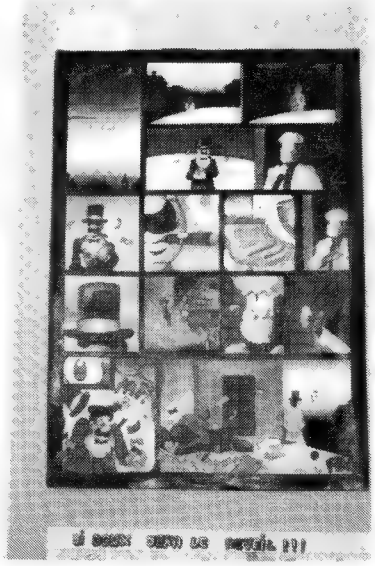
Canada was represented by Drawn and Quarterly Publications, whose Julie Doucet drew more compliments from professionals than any other artist – a tremendous recommendation considering the company we were in.

The top attractions were almost certainly the attendance of Robert Crumb and Gilbert Shelton, both founding fathers of the American underground scene.

Crumb's concert on the Thursday attracted mixed reviews, but no-one failed to be impressed by the Crumb exhibition mounted at the Centre National de la Bande Dessinee et de l'Image – a museum dedicated to comic strip art which is housed on five floors, and includes exhibition halls, a permanent display of thousands of pages of artwork, a stunning film show dedicated to the work of Enki Bilal and lecture hall.

The Crumb exhibition was perhaps the biggest draw of the week, with its giant Crumb head and a maze of corridors tracing developments and influences on his work, a room full of memorabilia and music chosen by Crumb, pages and pages of Crumb's ongoing psychoanalysis of himself and a Crumb inside a Crumb brain, busily scratching sketches in a pad.

The museum is the inspiration for a number of projects around the world which include one to be open in America in September, and the strong possibility of a permanent site being found in the UK this year!



uncanny timing everyone arrives as I reach the front of the queue.

Fan-dumb hasn't reached Angouleme yet, and no-body follows the big names into toilets to get one-handed autographs. The bar area was a popular meeting point where you could sit and chat without too many interruptions, and at one time or another those grappling with half-pints or tiny cups of coffee included (not in order of arrival, to save embarrassment) Nick Abadzis, Carl Critchlow, Hunt Emerson, David Hine, Don Lawrence, John McCrae, Dave McKean, Arthur Ranson, Bryan Talbot, Ron Tiner, Steve Whitaker, members of Forbidden Planet, Titan, Tundra UK, Knockabout, Fat Man Press, Electric Soup and Les Cartoonistes Dangereux.

Every now and then a little reality leaks into our lives, and I can say in all honesty that the three (very full) days we had were not enough time to fit in every event, every exhibition, meet every celebrity and chat with every publisher. On Saturday night, punchy with tiredness, relaxed with alcohol and stuffed into a taxi that arrived twenty minutes late, there was a chance to reflect on some of the missed opportunities. But look on the bright side: the 20th festival will take place next January. Maybe we'll see you there?

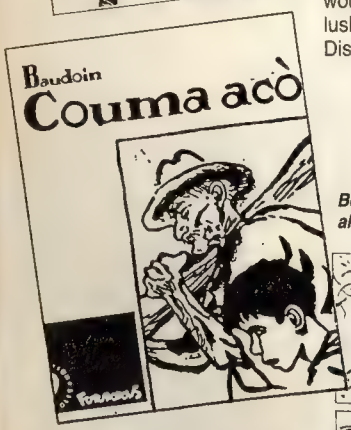
## SALOON INTERNATIONAL

Over lunch on Thursday, writer Patrick Marcel explains how to find people: "The Americans," he explains in excellent English, "will arrive in the afternoon from a good lunch. The British – well, it is after 11 o'clock. The bar is in the International Rights Area." Our reputation, it seems, was sealed two years ago when Britain was guest of honour. Thankyoumerci, Pierre. With

EACH DAY A STEADY STREAM OF SCHOOL CHILDREN CROCODILE THROUGH THE TENTS . . . UNMOVED BY DISPLAYS THAT, IN ENGLAND, WOULDN'T HAVE PASSED THE FIRST PRUDISH CUSTOMS OFFICER
ARAGONES
Angouleme 92

*Little Spirou by Tome & Janry.*

# THE 1991 ALPH'ART AWARDS




*Above: 'Peter Pan' by Loisel; 'Adios Palamita' by Lamy/Vatine/Clement; 'Couma Aco' by Baudoin.*

The climax of every Angouleme Comics Festival has to be the announcement of the Alph'Art Awards on the Friday evening in the town theatre, sardined to the roof with creators, journalists and public.

These awards are the comic's equivalent in France of Hollywood's Oscars, covered live on national TV and radio. In the style of the Oscars, video clips presenting each of the nominated albums are screened before the winner is declared. The name 'Alph'Art' comes from the title of Herge's last, unfinished Tintin adventure and the trophies feature his final sketch from the project.

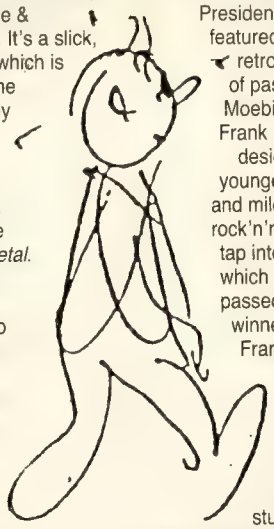
***Alph'Art Jeunesse:*** Out of 27 albums nominated, the jury of twelve children chose *Le Petit Spirou No. 2: Tu Veux Mon Doigt?* ('You Want My Finger?'), a flashback to the wild, wacky childhood of Belgium's other boy hero, Spirou, by Tome & Janry (published by Dupois). Tintin was never like this!

***Alph'Art Du Public:*** Every year, a jury of experts select 30 'indispensible' titles. The public then votes in bookshops, libraries and their local paper for their favourite out of a final shortlist of ten. This year it went to Regis Loisel's bold re-working of *Peter Pan* (Vents d'Ouest), lushly illustrated and far removed from Disney's saccharine version.

***Alph'Art Humour:*** First of the four awards chosen by the Grand Jury, led by this year's president, Marcel Gotlib. It was a shame that *Le Petit Spirou No. 2*, already a winner, picked up this prize too, because some of the other more deserving nominees missed out, particularly the lunatic *Rela Max* by Edika (translated in *Talking Turkey* magazine) and Dupoy & Berberian's painful *Monsieur Jean*.

***Alph'Art Coup de Coeur:*** This recognises the first or second album by new creators. Out of the five nominations, *Adios Palomita* by Lamy, Vatine & Clement (Delacourt) came top. It's a slick, rather vacuous, sexy western which is supposed to have revitalised the genre. For sheer weirdness, my vote would have gone to the dazzling *Delicatessen*-style carnival *Foligatto* by first-timers De Crecy & Tjoyas. You can see it in English in the March 1992 issue of *Heavy Metal*.

***Alph'Art Meilleur Album Etranger:*** To qualify, the album has to be translated into French, which certainly limits the choice. Bill Watterson's brilliant double act, Calvin and Hobbes received this award for the album *Calvin et Hobbes: En Avant Tete de Thon!* (Presses de la Cite). One of the other nominees, George Pratt's splatter-painted *Le Baron Rouge: Frere Ennemis* ('Enemy Ace') was given the Prix Special France/Info for an album on a contemporary theme, specifically its anti-war message.

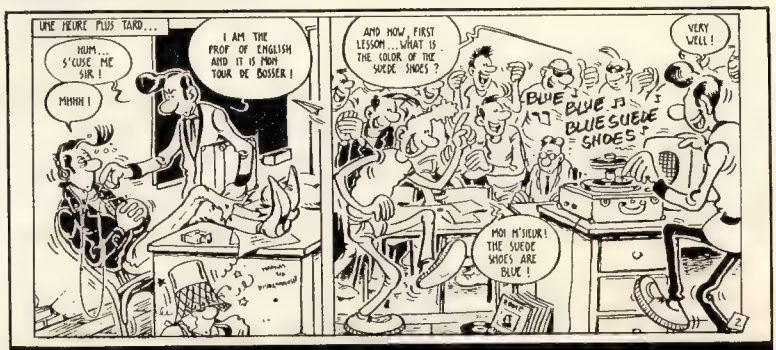


***Alph'Art Meilleur Album Francois:*** Finally, after ten years of albums courageously published by Futuropolis, Edmond Baudoin, a master of vivid black and white, gets the recognition he has long deserved. *Couma Aco* ('Like That') is a funny and touching portrait of his salt-of-the-earth grandfather. *Escape* magazine ran a new Baudoin story back in 1988 and Tundra will hopefully be translating an earlier album. Well worth discovering.

***Grand Prix de la Ville:*** This is the important one, awarded for a life's work. The winner gets to be the new President of the Festival and is featured next year in a big retrospective. The Academy of past winners, including Moebius, Eisner and Bilal, chose Frank Margerin, a populist choice designed to give the Festival a younger image. His broad humour and mild retro-rebellion, full of rock'n'roll and quiffs, successfully tap into France's youth culture, which may explain why they passed over other possible winners, such as my preference, Francois Boucq. Still, there's always next year.

This years other awards went to: Frederic Remuzat (Alph'Art Scholaire) for best unpublished work by a student, chosen from 22,000 entries; the Alph-Art Fanzine went to Louis Cance's invaluable infozine, *Hop!*; and best hope for the future, the Alph-Art Avenir, to Isabelle Dethan.

*Many thanks to Paul Gravett, UK Liasion for the Angouleme festival for his views on the results of this year's Alph'Art awards.*


UNE HEURE PLUS TARD...
HUM... S'CUSE ME SIR!
MMHH!
I AM THE PROF OF ENGLISH AND IT IS MOI TOUR DE BOSSER!
AND NOW, FIRST LESSON... WHAT IS THE COLOR OF THE SUEDE SHOES?
VERY WELL!
BLUE
BLUE
BLUE SUEDE SHOES
MOI M'SIEUR! THE SUEDE SHOES ARE BLUE!

## FRANK MARGERIN

This years winner of the Alph'Art Grand Prix and honorary president of next years festival was Frank Margerin, who has been described as the strip cartoonist equivalent of 'what the hammer is to the nail'.

He is well known in his home country as the chronicler of rock and roll adventures featuring Lucien, Ricky, Rocky, Gillou and others, although his work has yet to be extensively reprinted in Britain or America.

Born in Paris on January 9 1952, Margerin studied applied arts – and he did apply himself: with his colleague, Denis Sire, he formed the group Los Crados who later became Denis Twist. After a period of working in publicity, he was offered work by Jean-Pierre Dionnet, the editor-in-chief of the famous *Metal Hurlant* magazine.

His first book, *Frank Margerin Presente* was followed by nine others, including *Lucien se met au vert* in 1989. Lucien, in France, is probably the best known rocker of the 1980s, and Margerin's characters seemingly an integral part of youth culture.

His work incorporates the best aspects of classical humorous drawing, somewhere between the work of French artist Franquin and America's Gilbert Shelton, and he people's his books with beautiful suburban youths: their parents and the generation gap combine to make the story.

In 1991 Margerin launched a new character in the shape of *Manu*, with two albums already available.

***Below: from Baudoin's award winning album.***

**COMIC COLLECTOR TAKES A LOOK AT THE NEW JUDGE DREDD FORTNIGHTLY AND FINDS THREE BILLION DEAD. WILL DAVID BISHOP TAKE THE RAP? STEVE HOLLAND CHECKS OUT THE CHARGE SHEET.**

Yan Shimony's Dredd Fakuum's up the opposition.

All artwork © Fleetway Editions Ltd.

# GORE AND ORDER

***When the* Judge Dredd Magazine *hit the news stands in September 1990 the editors made sure there wouldn't be a single doubt as to what it was: the words JUDGE DREDD were printed in* Sun *battlecry-headline size, taking up half the (gatefold) cover above a leering Glenn Fabry Dredd. For twenty months old stoney-face has delivered his brand of justice and black humour, and from May 2 the monthly will be relaunched as a fortnightly title, with new numbering and a new line-up.***

The *Megazine* was Fleetway's first successful launch in years: by the late summer of 1990 it had been obvious for some time that *Crisis* was not the runaway success hoped for, despite publishing some excellent stories, and the equally vaunted *Revolver* was about to spin off the tracks. The 'young adult' market was on the point of collapse – taking with it some of the most innovative comics in years.

But the 'children of all ages' audience always been out there, and a monthly featuring the inflexible Dredd and characters from various *2000AD* tales was a surefire formula.

> DREDD IS LIKE A COATHANGER. HE'S ALWAYS THERE, HE'S ROCK SOLID, YOU CAN DEPEND ON HIM.

The monthly has lived up to its '*2000AD* presents' sub-title, although it has not been an easy ride, as editor David Bishop readily admits: "With a monthly you just can't get any momentum going. It's hard to get people really keyed up about a story if they read 8 pages and then have to wait up to five weeks for the next 8. It's like water torture.

"I'm surprised we've managed to get away with stories that last 12 months. 'Young Death' was only six pages an episode but it held people for a whole year. Even with the Dredd stories we have to show different aspects of him or get different writers to do it to get a different viewpoint. We have it easy, we've only got nine pages of Dredd a month – *2000AD*'s got to do a Dredd every week and has done for 15 years. Being original with Dredd strains a bit after a while."

David Bishop's involvement in the magazine began with a lucky break: "I applied for the job as assistant on *Revolver*, and came second," he recalls. "I didn't really know much about British comics until I came over here. I came from New Zealand originally, never having worked in comics, only having read them. I'd never really read *2000AD*, because when they arrive in Australia they're badly distributed and they were always at least four months behind, same with American comics. For a long time we only had black & white reprints, so when I first saw an American comic in colour it was a bit of a mind-blower.

"I saw the advertisement for a sub-editor for the *2000AD* group so I applied and didn't get the job, but Steve McManus said he was launching the *Megazine* later in the year and would keep me in mind. For about six months I did other things: I worked for BSB for a while, but got out before it sank. I started work on the *Megazine* in July 1990, and we launched two months later."

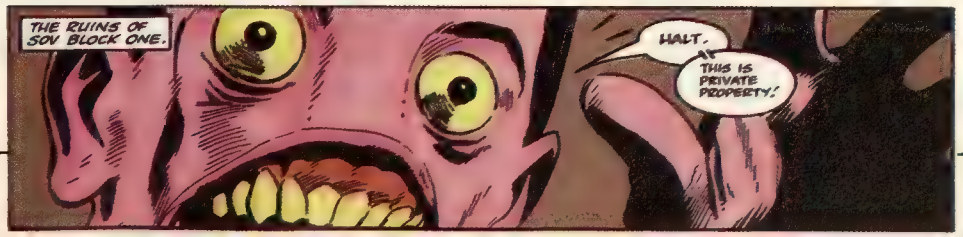
## OPENING GAMBIT

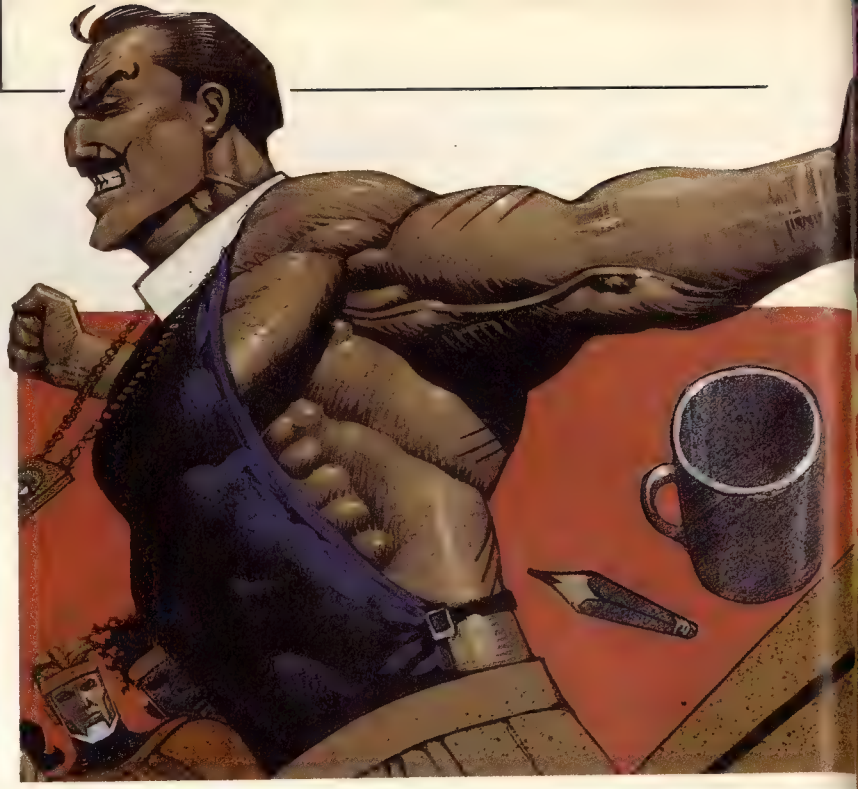
"John Wagner, Alan Grant and Steve had already solicited a lot of material from different writers and organised the original line-up. We had our first five stories and we were thinking about a replacement for 'Beyond Our Kenny' because that was a gimme from *2000AD*. One of our stories had fallen through and we had to borrow it, and Cam drew it to our size. The *Megazine* was launched in a size which was in proportion to American comics so it could be shrunk down into the right format, but the US magazine got canned after three issues. It came out the same month as *X-Force* which didn't help."

The total Dredd-orientation lasted three issues, and the first new arrival was a complete departure: 'Al's Baby' by John Wagner and Carlos Ezquerra, a madcap gangster yarn set in prohibition era Chicago. The Dredd-purists probably went into culture shock: " 'Al's Baby' was a total departure!" says Bishop. "We leapt back a hundred years in time, and threw the rule-book straight out the window. To be perfectly honest, the story's got nothing to do with the world of Dredd. We've been winding readers up a bit by saying the baby has significance. He could have, but I doubt it.

"That was something we had to do to make it a comic that people would want to read. The reason for doing the *Megazine* was to explore the world of Dredd, past, present and future. When we launched we had a solid line-up of characters lifted straight from *2000AD* with the exception of 'America' which proved to be an immediate hit because it was so different compared to everything else that had years to do it so people are going to have to be patient, but the first story is good anyway, and can be read on its own.

"The first book is called 'The Bad Man' and is seven episodes. It has no judges, and nothing to do with Mega-City:





been done before: it examined the effect of Dredd and the Judges on the little people.

"We could have survived a year on the basis of having Judge Dredd on the cover, but if we just kept doing the same old Dredd stuff it would have died. Dredd is like a coathanger. He's always there, he's rock solid, you can depend on him. He's not suddenly going to start wearing lacy underwear.

"But Dredd is only the foundation and on that you can build anything you like. We've chosen to build something which has the capacity to grow beyond the straight Dredd foundation; instead of going straight up we want to branch out so it makes for a more interesting title. You have to or people are going to bet bored and piss off.

"We made a conscious decision to develop our own characters: *2000AD* has built up all these great strips over the last 15 years. They can rest them for five years then bring them back from the past as well as introduce new characters. We didn't have anything.

" 'Al's Baby' was originally commissioned for another company and we stole it. It was our first creator owned project – we only had two rights on it, first publication and first graphic novel. Everything else stayed with John Wagner and Carlos Ezquerra, and apparently it's been syndicated right across Europe. Everybody has lapped it up.

"When it started we did get some criticism from the readers saying that the story was incongruous, that it has nothing to do with the world of Dredd, but it became hugely popular. It proved that we could do a story with no Judges and get away with it. People would read it and accept it as part of the *Megazine*.

"We have to create our own stable of characters to succeed. We can't live off the table scratchings of *2000AD*."

## SCOOBIE DOO WHO?

Far from living off scraps, the *Megazine* soon developed its own personality, although still firmly rooted in Dredd's world.

"We played it a bit safer after that," Bishops admits. 'Al's Baby' was a bit of a leap, especially for a fourth issue. We went for 'Red Razers' which had a Soviet judge and plenty of hip references to Vic Reeves from Mark Miller and Steve Yeowell. That story worried me no end. We had the whole Scoobie Doo gang running around, and when the first page came in I sent it back to Steve and said, 'Look, Steve, it cannot look like Scoobie Doo.' So he sent it back and he'd coloured in his collar and changed the angle of one of his ears and put some spots on him. I said for him to change the face, but nobody noticed. In the same issue we had Dennis the Menace running across the street in 'Armitage' – it was like the whole issue was loaded with references to copyright characters, and all I could think of was 'Oh, God . . .'

" 'Armitage' was my original idea but I handed it over to David Stone and Sean Phillips. It was supposed to be Inspector Morse as played by Clint Eastwood: he's really pissed off and he hits people a lot. Morse never hits anybody – he just walks around and talks them to death. The story was a big hit too, aided and abetted by some sumptuous artwork by Sean.

" 'The Straightjacket Fits' I take full responsibility for. The idea was originally Roger Langridge's but it grew and expanded, sprawled as it went on, and turned into a blatant parody of anything Grant Morrison has ever written. And Neighbours.

"That was another one which pissed some people off. In issue ten there were two pages of 'The Straightjacket Fits' out of 48 pages and we had more letters about 'Straightjacket' than anything else. It was unbelievable. It was about 60% positive, 40% negative. If you stick with something over a period of time people either start ignoring it or liking it, or else they keep hating it, but they've already said they hate it so it doesn't matter. Comments of incongruity tend to last about three issues and then people start reading the story for the story's sake, or else they ignore it.

"That's why most of our comedy stories tend to be shorter, because if they don't work you don't want to be wasting a quarter of an issue on it. We know our readers love action. After the second issue we got a letter from a guy aged 10 who said 'I didn't like 'Beyond Our Kenny' this issue because nobody got punched'. When I read a script that's something I always think about: has anyone been punched. It's stupid but it's true."

COMING UP WITH ARTISTS ISN'T DIFFICULT, BUT COMING UP WITH NEW WRITERS WHO CAN CUT IT IS A LOT HARDER

" 'Middenface McNulty' has been very popular. It was supposed to go into *2000AD* but for some reason it ended up in the *Megazine*, and 'Brit-Cit Babes' has gone down really well. Steve Sampson has done various bits over the years but had never done a full series, and simply by doing a series his storytelling has improved by about 500%. His artwork is very stylised, and I was expecting a 'love it' or 'hate it' reaction, but there have only been two hate-it's, and one of them was because of the Bolland cover: 'You have Bolland on the cover but you don't have Bolland inside'. It would be nice . . . in my lifetime!"

## NEW BLOOD

Bolland, or no Bolland as the case may be, the *Megazine* has featured some excellent artwork: the first issue included Jim Baikie, Colin MacNeil, John McCrea and Cam Kennedy as well as newcomer

*Devlin Waugh: freelance exorcist – "Noel Coward's head on Arnold Schwarzenegger's body."*

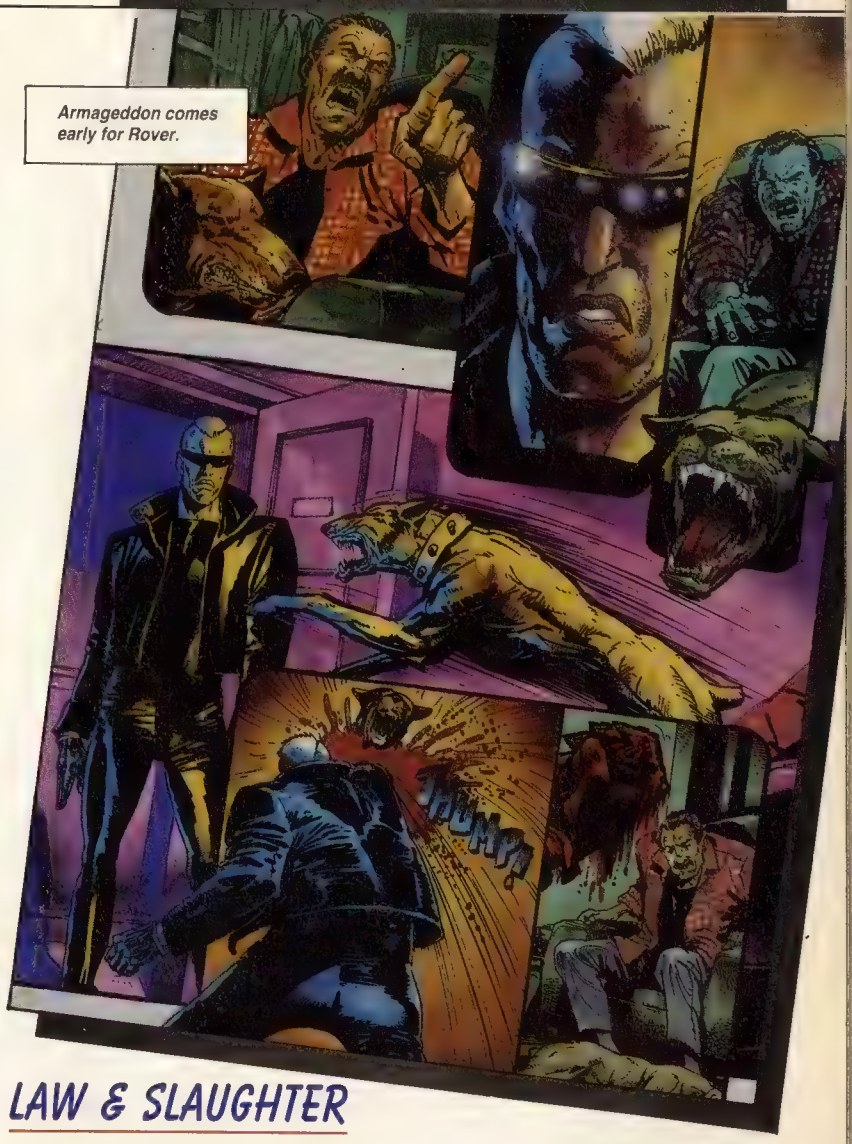
Peter Doherty. "Peter was our only new find in the original line-up, and he got 'Young Death' on the strength of some samples he showed Steve McManus at the first Glasgow convention. He's another one who improved over the length of the book. Every page was better than the last. It was like watching a growth curve in action."

More new blood has since been added to the roster, and continues to appear. "Dean Ormston did a one-off for us, then the seven-part 'Raptaur', and Roger Langridge had never really had anything published in this country. He's from New Zealand too, but I didn't know him then. I knew of him – he did 'Knuckles the Malevolent Nun' and had some one-offs published by Fantographics. Charles Adlard did a Dredd one-off in issue 18, and he's going to be doing 'Armitage Book 2', taking over from Sean.

"People that you've not seen yet but are coming include a guy called Russell Fox who has the Dredd in issue 19. He's got a very angular style, like Bill Sienkiewicz when he was doing *New Mutants*, with a bit of Kyle Baker chucked in for good measure.

"Nick Percival is a great mate of Dean Ormston, and is a slightly more esoterical version of Dean. He's doing a series with Garth Ennis for us called 'Sieez 'n' Ryder' which is about two bikers and set in the Cursed Earth.

"The hardest thing is to come up with new writers. Artists can sit at home or go to college and practise for years on end, but you don't get writers sitting at home writing practise scripts for ten years. It never works that way. They either send it in, or it never comes out of the drawer. People don't have anywhere to practise their writing except in public, and that shows up in people's work. Mine for instance, but we won't get into that. Coming up with artists isn't difficult, but coming up with new writers who can cut it is a lot harder. The only one we've had so far is Dave Stone who did 'Armitage'. He's developing several ideas and proposals and every time he writes something he gets better – that's not to say that [illegible] was bad – but Book 2 is better. Strangely enough I never get art samples, always tons of script samples for 'Strange Cases' and one-off [illegible] known who *2000AD* gets piles of artwork but never any scripts. It think [illegible] perceive us as a story-led [illegible] in America where the artist is [illegible] to use art as selling points [illegible] cuts ice with the fan community, story [illegible], people aren't [illegible] pages of good artwork."



*Armageddon comes early for Rover.*

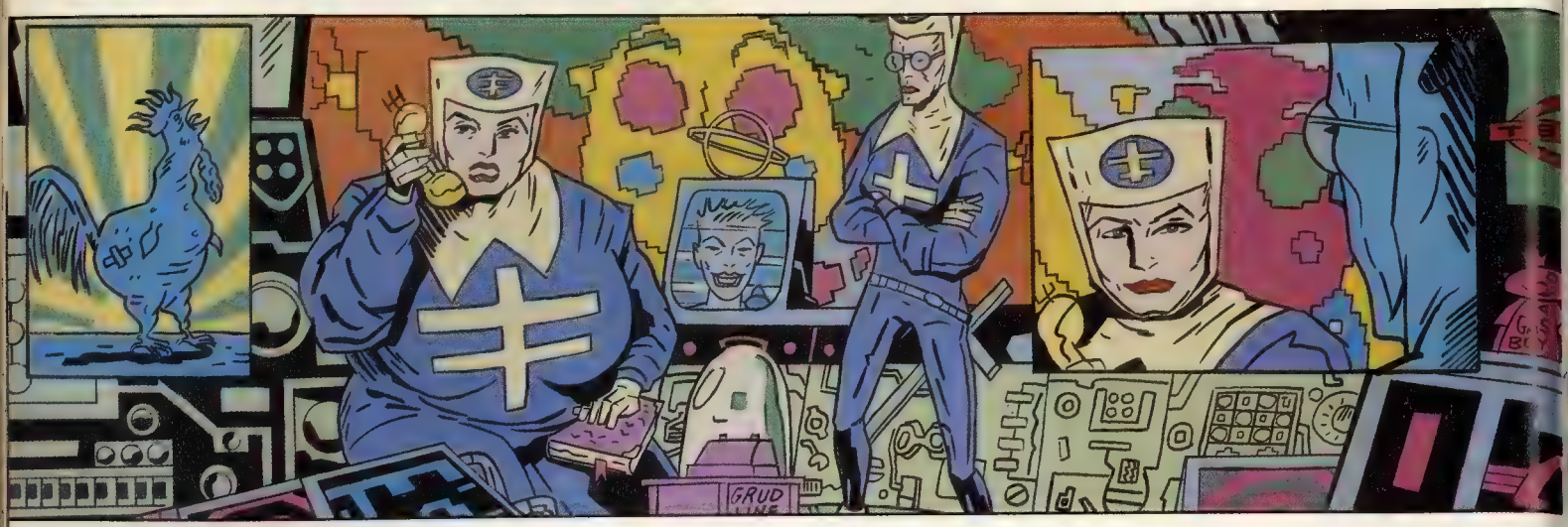
## LAW & SLAUGHTER

"When we go fortnightly we'll be introducing a new Dredd and three new stories. In the first issue we've got Judge Dredd in a story called 'Texas City Sting', a three parter written by John Wagner and with mono art by Yan Shimony coloured by Gina Hart. Yan did 'Big Berta' in *Blast!* and Steve McManus showed me some black and white samples. I didn't like the colour that was on 'Big Berta' because it was basically all orange and green. I've seen samples that are much better since, but at that point I'd not. A lot of people are going to be taken aback for the first issue.

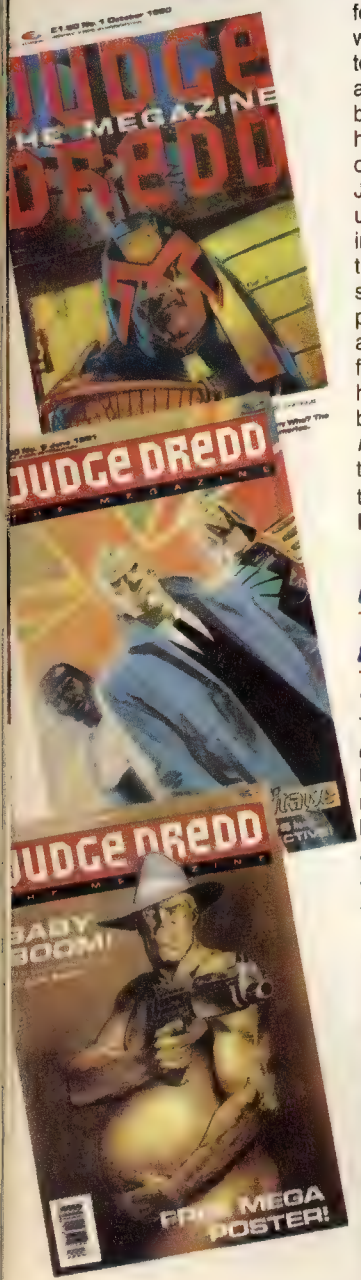
"Basically Dredd travels to Texas City because he's got 49 outstanding warrants, and everybody's hiding out. So he travels there and the deputy chief judge who happens to be in charge that day is a bit of a prick and won't let Dredd operate as a Judge. So Dredd does the next best thing and becomes a debt collector. He goes out and gets a nice big gun because he can't use his Lawgiver, so he's got this really big gun – not in the Bisley stakes, but big enough – and hunts them all down. It's a good traditional Dredd story with a twist in the tail.

"Also starting in issue one is 'Devlin Waugh: Swimming in Blood' which is written by John Smith, so when we say 'swimming in blood' we mean *swimming in blood*, especially by the end. Devlin Waugh is a freelance exorcist and papal envoy working for the Vatican. There's an underwater prison near the Bahamas called Aquatraz. They get a new inmate who's the king of the vampires with sundry other powers attached, and he starts turning everyone into vampires. Now, since they're Mega-City One's worst criminals, the murderers, the terrorists, VAT fiddlers, bank managers, male models, the real low-lifes, they've all been locked up underwater so they can't escape. A plague of vampirism sweeps the prison, and when you've got 2000 vampires on your hands, things get messy. The whole place has been surrounded by subs and Devlin Waugh is sent by the Vatican to rescue the situation.

"John Smith's original submission described Devlin as 'Noel Coward's head on Arnold Schwarzenegger's body'. He's a kick-ass fop. He goes around taking pinches off snuff, drinking Mint Julips and blowing the shit out of everything in sight for nine episodes. The best comparison is probably Aliens. It's a siege story, high tension, with a bit of comic relief courtesy of our Devlin. It's stunningly painted by Sean Phillips, it pisses all over his Armitage work which wasn't too shabby itself. It's certainly John Smith's best script. Devlin Waugh is a really great character, really charismatic. Readers are going to love him.



*Bat-kitch from Shaky Kane in Soul Sisters.*




"The other story which starts in the first issue is 'Armageddon', written by Alan Grant and painted by Carlos Ezquerra. What it will do over a series of four books is tell the pre-history of Dredd's world: it describes how we get from here to 2070 when the Judges take full control and Joe and Rico are first inducted to become cadet judges. For years people have been saying 'can we have a history of the Judges, or Young Judge Dredd or Judge Dredd Year One?' We've published unauthorised histories about the Volgan invasion and other bollocks, but basically the Volgan invasion was propoganda, spread by the powers that be to make people believe that the catastrophe that's about to happen in 'The Bad Man' was in fact the Volgans. Basically any history that hasn't been in the Dredd strip itself is being wiped out. This is our *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, this is clean up continuity time. It's probably going to take us four that's all a long way off. It's set in 1994 in New York and begins as the world ends."

## NUNS WITH ATTITUDE

"Issue two introduces our fourth story. That's called 'The Soul Sisters' and that's eight episodes written by myself and David Stone. Basically they're vigilante nuns with attitude in Brit-Cit. It's painted by Shaky Kane who's been around for ages. He was the guy on the extreme right at the Last Supper doing the Jack Kirby sketches.

"This is actually the first time he's done a series to somebody else's script. He did 'The A-Men' in *Deadline* but I suspect he wrote that himself because it's fairly freewheeling stuff, and he's done one-off stories from other people's scripts before – Judge Planet in the *Mega-Special* last year, and he's doing 'Mytek the Mighty' with Si Spencer for the *2000AD Action Special* – but never a full series.

"It's a piss take of The Blues Brothers and the Batman TV series, about these two nuns who have quit their order, The Little Sisters of Grud, because they get dissatisfied with the commerciality of it all, and they decide to get out on the street and beat the crap out of anybody they don't like the look of. They've got the Grudmobile, the Holy Hoverbike and the Soul Cycle and all sorts of stupid paraphanalia and they've got the Soul Sanctuary which is in the ruins of Temple Station. Their foes are the Kraze Twins, pretty obvious who that's based on, which is a two-headed Siamese mutant eastend mobster who gets beaten about by his mum a lot. The National Frump is a bunch of fascist 55 year old blue-rinsed, hand bag, twin-set and pearl women who go around trying to force 24-hour showings of 'Praise Be'. They're pretty nasty and they're lead by Auntie Insipia. Then there's Dr. Rupert Delerium who's your ubiquitous mad scientist figure who transforms everybody in the city into mindless zombies just for fun. There's a giant fist fight and it's just great fun. Oh, and Pope Bob the Second who's assassinated and replaced by a robot double. But that's giving the entire plot away.

A PLAGUE OF VAMPIRISM SWEEPS THE PRISON, AND WHEN YOU'VE GOT 2000 VAMPIRES ON YOUR HANDS, THINGS GET MESSY.

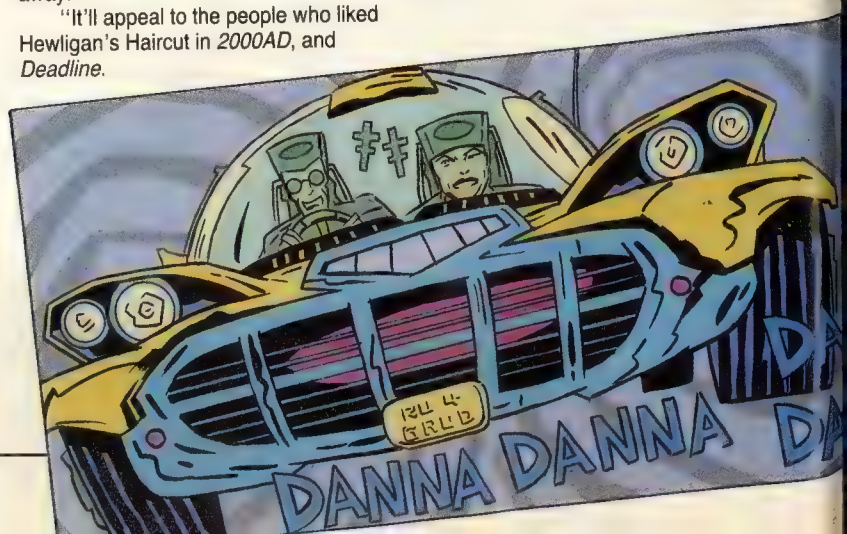
"It'll appeal to the people who liked Hewligan's Haircut in *2000AD*, and *Deadline*.

"Then there's the cross-over, 'Judgement Day', plotted by Garth Ennis and John Wagner and written by Garth. It starts in Prog 786 and 787 of *2000AD*, goes into *Fortnightly* 4, then runs in *2000AD* up to Prog 799 and issue 9 of the *Fortnightly*, and that is an epic. Three billion people die and there's a major new villain introduced called Sabbat who's from another world and has the ability to raise the dead. If you think about it, with 60 million people dumped in graves outside of Mega-City One that's going to cause a bit of a problem. Sabbat raises all of the dead around the world and all the Judges have to team up to fight them.

"Dean Ormston will be doing the bulk of the artwork. If anybody wants to collect the cross-over into a graphic novel they're going to have a hell of a time because it's going to be in two different sizes. But we won't have this problem from issue 10, because we're changing to *2000AD* size, simply because it'll make life a lot easier for everybody.

"Other stuff coming up includes a one-off Judge Anderson story by David Roach in issue 8 and Arthur Ranson's just signed up to do one. We've got a Hershey one-off story in issue 9 by David Stone and Paul Peart who did the *2000AD Data-Base* book. That will get us through to the change of size. Coming up after that we've got Colin Macneil doing the first half of an eleven part Dredd story which will look amazing. It's written by John Wagner, so it's the old team back."

And by that time the crystal ball is so blood-soaked it becomes impossible to read.



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*OCTOBER 1991 WAS CAPTAIN BRITAIN'S 15TH ANNIVERSARY, AND THIS MONTH SEES THE DOUBLE SIZED EXCALIBUR 50. HE HAS COME A LONG WAY FROM HIS ORIGIN AS THE SAXON CAPTAIN AMERICA WITH AN AMULET AND STAFF. PHIL HALL TAKES A LOOK INTO THE BACKGROUND OF EXCALIBUR LEADER, BRIAN BRADDOCK, THE UK'S VERY OWN CAPTAIN BRITAIN*

# THE SECRET HISTORY OF CAPTAIN BRITAIN

*All artwork © Marvel Comics Ltd*

***Captain Britain was created by a consortium of Marvel editors, led by Stan 'The Man' Lee, and was designed to expand the market into Britain. British comics sold better than their American counterparts, and were produced weekly rather than monthly. Coupled with the additional advertising space, and the fact that Marvel only needed a skeleton staff in England, the comic could be produced easily in the USA.***

***The job of scripting his original adventures was given to Chris Claremont, who looks back affectionately, saying: "They asked me to do Captain Britain because I was born in England. I was less than a year old when I emigrated."***

The former *X-Men* guru goes on to say: "They asked Herb Trimpe to draw the thing because he was living in Cornwall at the time, and Fred Kida got the inking job probably because he was stationed in England during the war or something."

Claremont's ten issue stint included the introduction of Merlin and Roma, Courtney Ross, Vixen, and the soon to be forgotten Betty Braddock who later went on to become Psylocke in the X-Men.

The original creative team soon left, and other Marvel staff took control of the title. Stan Lee's brother, Larry Leiber, who at the time was in charge in London, handled some scripts, as did Jim Lawrence, but it was Gary Friedrich who steered the good Captain to total mediocrity and completely Americanised the character. However, Friedrich can't take all the blame: Stan Lee thought of Britain as America's 51st state, and both assumed this was just what the Brits wanted.

John Buscema and a myriad of inkers handled the artwork for a while, but it was Ron Wilson, an American and Pablo Marcos, a Puerto Rican, who ended Captain Britain's first 39 week run. He continued briefly in *Super Spider-Man*, but bore no resemblance to the Captain of five years later.

### Reborn in the UK

When Dez Skinn took over the helm at Marvel UK he introduced a few changes, bringing in young British creators to write new tales of established Marvel characters. A new, enduring link was forged with the mystical Black Knight when Brian Braddock, fresh from a nervous breakdown, joined the battle to salvage Otherworld in the pages of *Hulk Comic*.

"I didn't like the idea of the Black Knight running, or rather flying, around New York fighting muggers with a sword and skintight underwear," recalls Skinn. "It became obvious that both the Black

Knight's and Captain Britain's origins were grounded in Arthurian legend, and it seemed obvious to make Cap a supporting character in a strip rooted deep in Cornwall and Merlin's home, Otherworld."

At least these stories of Brian Braddock were chronicled by British creators, with scripts by Steve Parkhouse (the first British writer to work for Marvel comics in America) and art by Paul Neary and John Stokes. These able bodies eventually wrote Cap out of the series in the closing issues, returning him to Earth, this time in the company of a cute sidekick called Jackdaw the Elf.

Eighteen months elapsed between Cap's last appearance in *Hulk Comic* and his auspicious debut with a new uniform and a new

DOWN WITH THE FEMALE TYRANT!
--WHO MISRULES OUR BRITISH REALM!
STONE ME! IT'S CAPTAIN BRITAIN!
GOOD HEAVENS! HE'S HURTLING RIGHT AT ME!
THE FELLOW'S GONE STARK RAVING MAD! GET BEHIND ME, DEAR QUICKLY!
AND AMONG THE AWESTRUCK ONLOOKERS ARE CHIEF INSP. THOMAS OF THE YARD...AND A SINISTER LURKING FIGURE!
BLASTED SUPERHERO'S DONE HIS NUT, LIKE I ALWAYS SAID HE WOULD!
AT LAST MY COUNTDOWN TO TRIUMPH BEGINS!
I HAVE TRANSFORMED CAPTAIN BRITAIN INTO A MINDLESS MISSILE!
A MISSILE AIMED AT THE THRONE ITSELF!
BUT I CAN'T SHOOT HIM TO SAVE HER MAJESTY!...NOT IN THIS CROWD!
PLOT BY BOB BUDIANSKY * SCRIPT BY JIM LAWRENCE
ART BY RON WILSON & PABLO MARCOS * INKS BY ZIPS BY BRIAN H. MOORE * LETTERS BY I. WATANABE
EDITED BY LARRY LIEBER

**THE FURY IS AS FRIGHTENING A VILLAIN AS YOU COULD WISH TO IMAGINE, AN ORGANIC ROBOT, PART LIVING FLESH, PART METAL, AND POSSESSING AS MANY GLANDS AS COGS AND WHEELS**

creative team in the pages of *Marvel Superheroes 377*. Dave Thorpe, Alan Davis and Paul Neary began the new adventures on a twisted version of our own Earth, distancing the Captain from his previous stereotypical American adventures, and introducing new characters who were to have an incredible bearing on Brian Braddock's life: Mad Jim Jaspers, the Crazy Gang, and the delightful Saturnyne typified the feeling of quirky British eccentricity that has stayed with Captain Britain ever since.

The new team would last for only ten issues, at which point Dave Thorpe left, thwarted in his desire to turn Captain Britain into a radical political strip and move the action to Northern Ireland. He was replaced by Alan Moore, the then up-and-coming writer of Marvelman and V For Vendetta in *Warrior*. Moore took the strip from the sublime to the outrageous.

Jaspers was transformed from a second-rate crackpot into a mutant with reality-warping abilities and a neferious past, while Jackdaw was despatched with gay abandon by one of the greatest creations in British comics' history: the Fury.

The Fury is as frightening a villain as you could wish to imagine, an organic robot, part living flesh, part metal, and possessing as many glands as cogs and wheels, whose sole purpose is to eradicate superheroes.

In a haunting moment from the comics' history, Captain Britain, deserted by his only ally, Saturnyne, is hunted down and clinically executed.

### Born Again!

The Captain's second resurrection at the hands of Merlin was to create more fundamental changes in Cap's future, and a few surprises about his past. The chess-like game begun by Merlin starts to get out of hand, and an anomaly arises over which Merlin has no control.

Jaspers' incredible power over reality was leaking into other realities and, after a ferocious interlude on Otherworld involving Saturnyne being tried for treason, the Captain discovered that he wasn't the only Captain Britain, but only one of many. Our hero, along with the Special Executive (originally introduced as supporting characters in *Dr. Who Monthly*, and later to become the Technet) return with Saturnyne to Earth and Braddock Manor, unaware that circumstances on Otherworld have unleashed the Fury to roam the dimensional corridors of space.

The Fury's arrival on 'our' Earth coincided with Jim Jaspers becoming Prime Minister and his campaign to outlaw superheroes. Only Captain Britain stands in his way, but the revelation that the Fury was the creation of a Jaspers from an alternative dimension causes a glitch in the killing machine: it cannot accept this realities Jaspers, and attempts to kill him. It eventually succeeds, but in a weakened state, the Fury is finished off by Captain UK – Linda McQuillan, an alternative Cap who had previously escaped the Fury by transferring to our dimension.

These tales are some of the best ever produced in comic books, Marvel or otherwise. It was also the swansong of Alan Moore as writer: a growing feud with Marvel was about to boil over.

### Reprints

The series was continued by artist Alan Davis, taking the role of writer on himself to tie up loose ends before Jamie Delano took over the scripting. The new team spent time building up the role of the shape-changer, Meggan, eventually taking the risque move of making her the Captain's lover.

They also delved into the Captain's past, reintroducing Braddock's brother Jamie, this time as a despot and cad responsible for the slaughter of thousands of protected wild animals. Cap came up against a host of new foes – and some old ones – but nothing quite had the feel of dread and terror which was conveyed during the Alan Moore days.

**JASPERS WAS TRANSFORMED FROM A SECOND-RATE CRACKPOT INTO A MUTANT WITH REALITY-WARPING ABILITIES**

These latter stories were collected together as a trade paperback which is recommended reading, but much of the above has never, and never will be, mentioned in the pages of *Excalibur*; and the stories that appeared between *Marvel Super Heroes 387* and *Mighty World of Marvel 13* are unlikely to ever be reprinted.

'Why?' I hear you cry. 'We don't want to pay £5 an issue from dealers for nine-page stories'. Or, 'I can't find a shop that has all the originals even if I can afford the price'. Persevere, because that's the only way you'll get to read the full story.

The reason lies with Alan Moore. Marvel, sometimes cast as the villain by the comics media, have tried in vain for ten years to reprint the material, yet Moore refuses them permission. Allegedly it started when Marvel reprinted a Dr. Who story written by Moore without asking permission or paying a reprint royalty. Moore responded by withholding permission to use any further stories; a difference in copyright laws between the UK and USA meant that although Marvel considered Marvel UK as a branch of the parent company and that stories were bought outright, Moore's permission was required to reprint stories in their entirety.

The rift widened when Marvel persevered in a law suit against Marvelman, a character written by Moore for Dez Skinn's *Warrior* magazine. Marvelman had been created in the 1950s by Mick Anglo, at a time when Marvel were known as Atlas Comics, and *Warrior* had already been publishing Moore's revival for two years without any problems of mistaken identity arising, but the disappearance of the lead character from its pages was soon followed by the disappearance of the magazine altogether.

The final nail in the coffin came out of something totally innocuous: Chris Claremont had expressed an interest in resurrecting Jim Jaspers for an X-Men story that would also involve Captain Britain. Jaspers was reintroduced in *X-Men 200*, but at the last minute changes had to be made and what looked like a sprawling X-Men/Magneto/Jaspers/Captain Britain storyline was forgotten.

As recently as October 1991, his 15th birthday, Marvel have wanted to reprint a volume of Cap's original adventures leading up to the stories reprinted in the trade paperback, but they are still thwarted by Moore. Perhaps one day his fans will be given the chance to share in one of comics best-kept secrets: the unexpurgated history of Captain Britain.

*Phil Hall is the proprietor of Squonk!, as well as a contributor to the pages of* ***Comics International.***

## THE CAPTAIN BRITAIN FILE

HEIGHT- 6 foot 5ins
WEIGHT- 15 Stone approx.
MUSCULAR PHYSIQUE- ABNORMALLY DEVELOPED
NECK - Sternomastoid/ Trapelius
SHOULDER - Deltoid
BACK - Latissimus Dorsi
SYNCHRONIC ANALYSIS -
1. Spontaneous use and application of correct Grammar
2. Familiar use of technical and scientific terms
3. Pronunciation and grammatical definition suggest London (Thames) University education
4. No colloquial slang
5. No unusual inflections
SHALLOW PHILTRUM
SCARRED TUBERCLE
FAIR SKIN
LOW WING (ALA)
THIN NOSTRIL
DROPPED MEDIAL INCISOR
SCARRED MENTO-LABIAL FURROW
I AM PROPOSING THAT BRIAN BRADDOCK IS CAPTAIN BRITAIN

**in MARVEL SUPERHEROES (Written by David Thorpe, except 385 by Davis (plot) and Paul Neary (script). Alan Moore scripts from 387)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 377 | 9/81 | (untitled) | 5pp |
| 378 | 10/81 | Outcasts | 4pp |
| 379 | 11/81 | The Junkheap that Walked like a Man | 5pp |
| 380 | 12/81 | In Support of Darwin | 5pp |
| 381 | 1/82 | Re-Birth | 5pp |
| 382 | 2/82 | Against the Realm | 5pp |
| 383 | 3/82 | Faces of Britain | 5pp |
| 384 | 4/82 | Friends and Neighbours | 5pp |
| 385 | 5/82 | Attack of the Binary Beings | 5pp |
| 386 | 6/82 | If the Push Should Fail | 5pp |
| 387 | 7/82 | A Crooked World | 5pp |
| 388 | 8/82 | Graveyard Shift | 5pp |

**in THE DAREDEVILS (Written by Alan Moore)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1/83 | A Rag of Bone, A Hank of Hair | 8pp |
| 2 | 2/83 | An Englishman's Home | 8pp |
| 3 | 3/83 | Thicker Than Water | 8pp |
| 4 | 4/83 | Killing Ground | 8pp |
| 5 | 5/83 | Executive Action | 10pp |
| 6 | 6/83 | Judgement Day | 11pp |
| 7 | 7/83 | Rough Justice | 11pp |
| 8 | 8/83 | Arrivals | 10pp |
| 9 | 9/83 | Waiting for the End of the World | 11pp |
| 10 | 10/83 | The Sound and the Fury | 13pp |
| 11 | 11/83 | But They Never Really Die | 12pp |

**in MIGHTY WORLD OF MARVEL (Written by Alan Moore to 13; 14 by Steve Craddock & Davis; Davis script from 15)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | 12/83 | The Candlelight Dialogues | 8pp |
| 8 | 1/84 | The Twisted World (Reprise) | 8pp |
| 9 | 2/84 | Among Those Dark Satanic Mills | 8pp |
| 10 | 3/84 | Anarchy in the U.K. | 8pp |
| 11 | 4/84 | Foolsmate | 8pp |
| 12 | 5/84 | Endgame | 15pp |
| 13 | 6/84 | A Funeral on Otherworld | 8pp |
| 14 | 7/84 | Bad Moon Rising | 8pp |
| 15 | 8/84 | Tea and Sympathy | 8pp |
| 16 | 9/84 | And in all the Old Familiar Places | 8pp |

**in CAPTAIN BRITAIN (Written by Jamie Delano, except 5 by Mike Collins & Davis; Davis script from 13. Mark Farmer inks on 14)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1/85 | Myth, Memory and Legend | 12pp |
| 2 | 2/85 | Law and Diusorder | 11pp |
| 3 | 3/85 | Flotsam and Jetsam | 11pp |
| 4 | 4/85 | Sid's Story | 12pp |
| 5 | 5/85 | Double Game | 11pp |
| 6 | 6/85 | A Long Way From Home | 11pp |
| 7 | 7/85 | Things Fall Apart | 11pp |
| 8 | 8/85 | Childhood's End | 11pp |
| 9 | 9/85 | Winds of Change | 11pp |
| 10 | 10/85 | African Nightmare | 11pp |
| 11 | 11/85 | Cold Comfort | 11pp |
| 12 | 12/85 | Alarms and Excursions | 11pp |
| 13 | 1/86 | It's Hard to Be a Hero | 11pp |
| 14 | 2/86 | Should Auld Acquaintance | 13pp |

# DRAWING THE SWORD

## MIKE CONROY TALKS TO ALAN DAVIS THE WRITER/ ARTIST OF **EXCALIBUR**

**CC:** ***To start with, because some of the audience this magazine is reaching is new to comics, can we do a quick resume of your career to date? I know that you started out by meeting Paul Neary of Marvel UK. How did it go from there?***

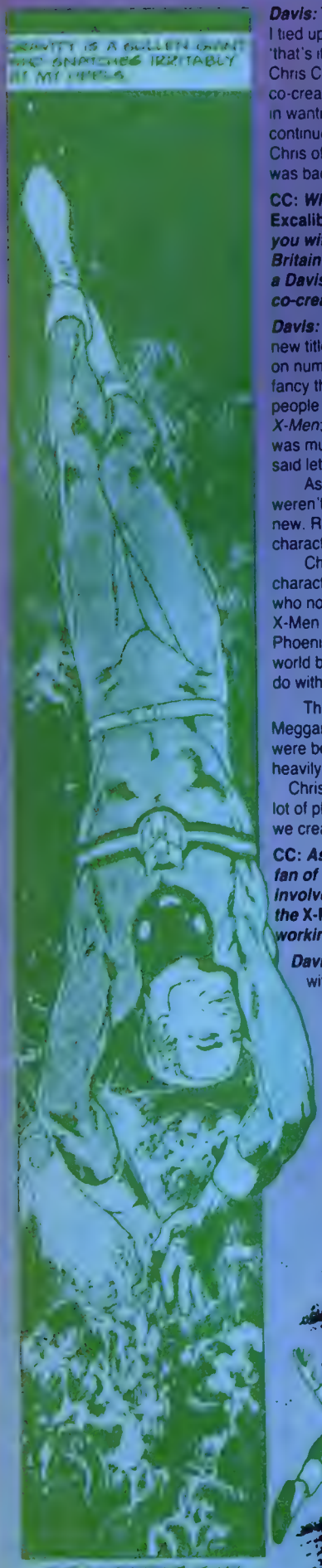
***Davis:*** I started with Captain Britain for Marvel UK. Then the opportunity came to take over on Marvelman (from Gary Leach) in *Warrior*. That lead to *2000AD* which is the point I went full time doing Harry 20 on the High Rock. I continued doing Captain Britain, and Marvelman; D.R. & Quinch replaced Harry 20.

I then tried to get work in America, started on an Aquaman thing that I never finished, worked on *Batman and The Outsiders*, then on X-Men related stuff (annuals, *New Mutants* annuals) and then it was *Excalibur*. After I left *Excalibur*, I did *Batman: Full Circle*, *Wolverine: Bloodlust* and a few other little things and then back to *Excalibur* again.

**CC:** ***Captain Britain is a fairly significant member of the Excalibur team. How do you feel about him? Do you see Captain Britain as an albatross around your neck?***

***Davis:*** No! This is the most asked question: why do I keep on coming back to Captain Britain when I've left so many times? Have I some unbreakable bond with the character?

**CC:** ***I've always thought the character followed you around.***


GRAVITY IS A FICKLE GIANT AND SNATCHES IRRITABLY AT MY LIMBS
THE HURRICANE IS MY MISTRESS. I GUIDE MY BODY ACROSS HER FRENZIED VECTORS AND FEEL SUCH A PIN ECSTACY OF BIRDS

***Davis:*** That's right. When I left Marvel UK, I tied up all the loose ends and thought, 'that's it, finished'. But I didn't realise that Chris Claremont, being the original writer/co-creator of Captain Britain, had a stake in wanting to see Captain Britain continued. So when I rejected the *X-Men*, Chris offered *Excalibur* and that was it. I was back on Captain Britain.

**CC: *What was the genesis of* Excalibur*? You say Chris presented you with* Excalibur *including Captain Britain but in the book it's credited as a Davis/Claremont or Claremont/Davis co-creation.***

***Davis:*** Well, it was Chris's idea to do a new title. Chris had asked me to do *X-Men* on numerous occasions and I didn't really fancy the idea of joining the ranks of people who had drawn the *X-Men*; to be the originator of something was much more appealing. So when Chris said let's do a new title I was all for it!

As for the genesis of *Excalibur*, we weren't really creating anything totally new. Rather we were taking some existing characters and using them in a new way.

Chris had been handling three of the characters – Nightcrawler and Shadowcat who no longer seemed to fit in the with the X-Men team, and Rachel Summers/Phoenix who had been sent to Mojo's world because no-one knew quite what to do with her!

The other two, Captain Britain and Meggan, were 'homeless' at that time and were both characters that I had been heavily involved with.

Chris put all five together and, using a lot of plotlines from Captain Britain's past, we created Excalibur!

**CC: *As I understand it, Chris is a big fan of your work and wanted to get involved with you. Now that he's free of the* X-Men*, do you have any plans for working together in the future?***

***Davis:*** I've got no objection to working with Chris. It would really depend on the project and the time because, obviously, I'm committed to *Excalibur* depending on how things go.

## STAGNATION

**CC: *You were off* Excalibur *for almost two years. During that time there were a lot of fill-in issues that affected the continuity of the book. What did you have to do, or feel you wanted to do when you came back with issue 42.***

***Davis:*** Well, basically sort it out, try to get some concrete direction to *Excalibur*. The consensus had been that *Excalibur* had stagnated since around issue 4 or 5 because 'The Cross-Time Caper' hadn't been very successful. A lot of people viewed it as treading water for 13, 14 issues. It was basically the same story in a different reality every couple of months.

There hadn't been any character development or story progression since issue 4 or 5 until issue 24. Then there were all the fill-ins. After Chris left, a series of writers had to tread water waiting for someone to take the reins and point the book in a particular direction.

So there were a lot of unanswered questions, a lot of plotline baggage that had to be resolved. That was basically the situation I inherited. Terry Kavanagh, my editor, had a list of things to be sorted out, resolved, built on, what ever.

**CC: *Any examples? Any obvious things?***

***Davis:*** How Meggan's powers work. How Captain Britain's powers work. Obviously Meggan and Captain Britain are fairly new to the American audience.

Some explanation of the complex past of Rachel Summers/Phoenix and just basically to tidy up the story line threads that had been started in issues 4 or 5. Some of those won't be addressed until issues 55 or 56, something like that.

**CC: *Will issue 50 tie up a lot of them?***

***Davis:*** Yes.

## SPECIALS

**CC: *The other problem, if 'problem' is the right word, is the fact that, because of* Excalibur*'s success, Marvel require books outside the regular, monthly titles: specials, that sort of thing which are written by others. Does this cause you any problems? Do you have any input?***

***Davis:*** I'm having some input now because of problems created in the past. Stories have been commissioned, drawn up, finished and rushed out to printers that actually contradicted the long term progression I'd started. Having learned from that, I now see most of the *Excalibur* stories before they go into production.

**CC: *So if it's not your idea, at least it's not upsetting anything that you've got planned?***

***Davis:*** Yes. You can't create a positive direction then have people pulling away.

**CC: *On a slightly different subject, until the time that you returned to* Excalibur*, Paul Neary had been your inker, or at least your regular inker, for some three years. Now you have Mark Farmer inking for you. What difference has the change in inker made to your way of working?***

***Davis:*** Very, very slight because they are both brilliant inkers, very tight. I'd say the biggest difference would be that Paul had a certain angular approach to the way he worked, a certain sharpness, whereas Mark has a more round and brushy approach. That's the extent of it really.

'THERE WERE A LOT OF UNANSWERED QUESTIONS, A LOT OF PLOTLINE BAGGAGE THAT HAD TO BE RESOLVED. THAT WAS BASICALLY THE SITUATION I INHERITED.'

***Davis:*** Not really. I'm not a good enough writer to write for anyone else. My writing gives me creative control over the subject matter that I'm drawing and I enjoy the storytelling process but I really can't see myself becoming a 'writer'.

I feel lucky to be allowed to write because I don't feel qualified. I feel I'm very limited as a writer and that, at some point, I'm going to get caught out. People are going to find out I'm illiterate and that's it . . . the end of my writing career!

**CC:** ***Well that kills the next question . . . any artists you'd like to write for! How about characters? Are you solely devoting yourself to*** **Excalibur** ***or have you got other characters that maybe you'd like to work on if you had the time or if your circumstances change?***

***Davis:*** This is another question that I'm asked quite a lot and I always give the same answer which is, basically, you must focus exclusively on the characters that you are working on. If you're looking to do another character then you can't really be enjoying what you are working on. You have to give what you're working on 100 per cent, you have to believe in it or else it shows, I think.

There are other things I would like to do but they are vague possibilities; nothing I'm yearning or straining to do.

**CC:** ***When you were working on*** **Captain Britain** ***at Marvel UK – certainly post-Alan Moore – you were co-writing if not writing most of the scripts. Recently there has been the*** **Wolverine: Bloodlust** ***oneshot which you co-wrote with Paul, and now you are writing*** **Excalibur**. ***A lot of other artists, John Byrne, Frank Miller and Dave Gibbons to name a few, developed into writer/artists, and are now working primarily as writers. Do you see your career developing in this direction?***

.. FOR EVERY TIME HIS EYES CLOSE, HE WATCHES HIS PARENTS DIE.
DID YOU LIKE THE MOVIE, BRUCE?
I HOPE HE DID, MOTHER. HE MADE US SIT THROUGH IT TWICE...

## CREATORS' RIGHTS

**CC:** ***Something that's happened just recently is that creators like Jim Lee, Rob Liefeld and Todd McFarlane have all decided to move away from Marvel to get greater rights in the creation of their own characters. Does this have any appeal for you?***

***Davis:*** I'd like to get big bucks, I'd like to make lots of money, but greater creator control is also greater responsibility and, if your income relies more heavily on the success of the sales of the title that you're working on, it's more of a risk.

The thing about working for a big company like Marvel or DC is that you're guaranteed a certain amount of income. You don't get as much income as you might get if you're working with more creative rights, but that basic minimum is gauranteed. I'm not prepared to gamble.

**CC:** ***How do you feel about creating characters for Marvel? I mean, I know you accept that that's the contract but do you ever feel 'I wish that I was doing this for myself'?***

***Davis:*** Well, if I was to create a really original character I might feel different but I don't see anyone having created an original character in a very long time.

Creating a new character is not an easy proposition. Take Wolverine for instance. He wasn't just created overnight. If you look at Wolverine's first apperance he's this runty little guy in *Incredible Hulk*. I've since read that Len Wein considered him as being a teenager with claws built into his gloves. Compare that to what he's metamorphosised into over a very long period of time. I think most characters evolve in this way.

I don't believe in the concept of just being able to sit down in a darkened room and create completely new characters. What people are doing is ripping off characters from elsewhere, changing them slightly and giving them a slightly different name. That's all I ever do. You look around and you cannibalise things that you like from other characters, jettison what you don't like, and give it a slightly new name and a slightly new look.

I don't see myself as having created any brand new characters ever.

**CC:** ***What does the future hold for*** **Excalibur**?

***Davis:*** Initially, after issue 50, issue 51 ties up the dinosaur plotline which started in *Excalibur* 8 or 9. That's being pencilled by Dougie Braithwaite. Issue 52, drawn by Will Simpson, is the Phoenix's story from the Phoenix's point of view – that isn't Jean Gray or Rachel Summers – that is the Phoenix tells its own story. It's like an exposé!

Issue 53 has the return of the Crazy Gang, I don't know who is going to be drawing that at the moment. I'll be returning to pencil Issue 54 and begin a new storyline which will wind up the Jamie Braddock, Vixen, Saturnyne storyline which started way back in *Excalibur* 4 or 5.

Initially this was the story I intended to do when I took over on *Excalibur* but Chris Claremont had been told that he could do it as a special. Since Chris hasn't done it, Terry has told me to go ahead because it has been hanging around for an embarrassingly long time. That will take *Excalibur* through to issue 56.

There will also be some adventures with Phoenix in space and stuff like that.

**CC:** ***So you're planning a good six to nine months ahead as you're working?***

'THE LOUSY COLOURING WAS PART OF THE REASON I ORIGINALLY LEFT EXCALIBUR AND I WON'T HESITATE TO QUIT AGAIN IF IT CONTINUES TO DETERIORATE!'

***Davis:*** Oh yes. There are a lot more story ideas in the pipeline, but most are very vague at the moment. There will be, or at least there's tentatively plotted, an *X-Men/Excalibur* crossover at some point in the future but it's a long way down the line yet.

HE DIED. THE TABLE WAS DESTROYED. HIS KNIGHTS MOSTLY SLAIN—YET THE DREAM SURVIVED.
THEY BECAME LEGEND.
AND THE SWORD, THE MEANS OF KEEPING THE LEGEND ALIVE AND VITAL THROUGH THE AGES.

## COLOURING

**CC: *What are the downsides to the job?***

***Davis:*** The colouring on *Excalibur* is a big downside. The methods that they use to colour are being changed, the paper quality is changing, the screen dot size is changing with the overall effect that some of the issues of *Excalibur* are really muddy to look at.

It's disheartening to spend a lot of time drawing a group of figures, complete with expression and body language, only to see them obscured by dense, flat colour.

In the old system with the cheaper paper and old style colouring, the old style presses, the colour was transparent so that, no matter how bad the colouring was, the line work stood out. Now the colouring is so strong it can actually be darker or appear darker than the black lines. In effect the art work is being redrawn.

The lousy colouring was part of the reason I originally left *Excalibur* and I won't hesitate to quit again if it continues to deteriorate!

**CC: *Because all these problems are created after you have finished with everything, you've got no control over it. You don't see them until you see the finished product.***

***Davis:*** There's a lot of things you have no control over. For instance on the cover of issue 48 there was a speech bubble coming from Kitty Pryde which was lost in transit.

**CC: *For the record, what was she saying?***

***Davis:*** "Okay, we look heroic but I'm getting cramp!"

On page 24, the sound effects had to be stripped in. It's where Kylun was repeating sound effects from a previous fight. I'd left plenty of space to give the sound effects impact but the inserts were so small and scruffily done that you could barely read them.

It was the only thing that was left to be done in the office; everything else was covered. This sort of incompetence always depresses me. There is nothing to do except quit or pull out a few handfulls of hair and scream a lot!

**CC: *It comes back to the fact that the money isn't the be all and end all; there is the care of the product.***

***Davis:*** That's right.

**CC: *It's what you want. Your vision of what you want to see.***

***Davis:*** We actually had good colour on issue 42 to 44, then 45 was disastrous. They're trying to get it together, so hopefully issue 50 is going to be better colour.

**CC: *Were they all the same colourist?***

***Davis:*** It's nothing to do with the colourist. It has to do with the change in the technical process. Marvel currently use 25, 50, 75 and 100 per cent colour screens, whereas the paper they use is good enough to take a 10 per cent colour screen spectrum.

**CC: *So they are using too big a hammer for the job.***

***Davis:*** That's right. The new processes are so much more subtle but they're still using the old crude gaudy colour scheme which looks far cruder on high quality paper.

**CC: *How about working on your own at home? Do you find that as a downside or is there a plus side to it from your point of view?***

***Davis:*** It has its advantages in that you are your own boss but that is sometimes a disadvantage because you never give yourself a big enough kick up the backside to get going!

I spend a lot of time on the phone talking to people who encourage me. I've got brothers who come and look over my shoulders and tell me what they think of what I'm doing. They're honest critics, they're not like critics who are getting something out of me by what they say. They're basically people who say it's rubbish and that I should do it again, and you know that they mean it! Now my son is getting old enough, he does the same.

So I take all the input that I can get and, when it's from people I can trust, it's actually more valuable than the opinions of far more knowledgeable people who have their own bias or a vested interest in getting me to do something for them.

## NEW ARTISTS

**CC: *Going back to the* Excalibur *51–53, how much say did you have in choosing the artist to do those issues?***

***Davis:*** Well, I asked for both Dougie and Will specifically and Terry accommodated me.

**CC: *And have you written stories specifically aimed at their strengths?***

***Davis:*** Yes. I asked both of them what they wanted to do.

Dougie had been working on the *Punisher* for a long time and was fed up doing serious, realistic stuff. He wanted to do something that was lightweight and humourous so that was the sort of story I wrote for him. Will basically wanted to do a lot of superheroes, so he's got a lot of superheroes!

**CC: *If you have the next year almost worked out on* Excalibur, *is there any point in asking what the future holds for Alan Davis? I mean do you have any plans?***

***Davis:*** I never ever really plan far ahead on anything. I'm always waiting for the balloon to burst: I'm a pessimist by nature.

There are a lot of things I would like to do; only vague things – story ideas that

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*Marvelman* © Alan Moore & Alan Davis
*Star Wars* © Lucas Film Ltd
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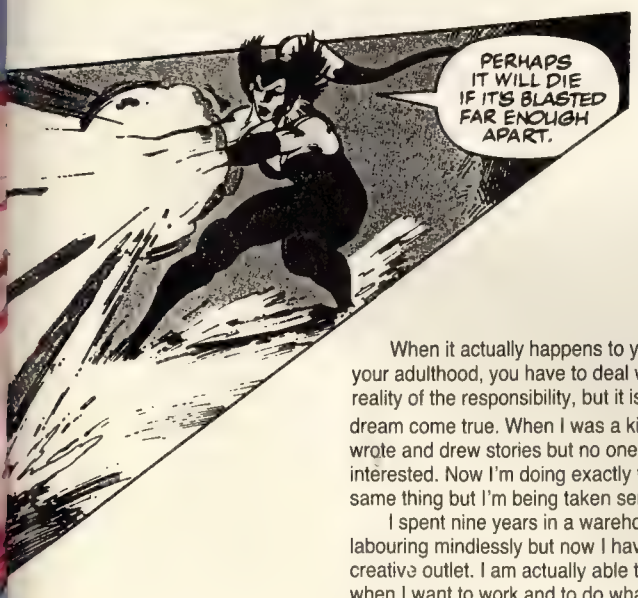
I've jotted down and thought 'I'd like to do that at some point' but never pursued. So if *Excalibur* was to finish there are plenty of things I might try.

**CC: *But nothing specific at the moment?***

***Davis:*** No. I'm just enjoying what I'm doing. If, when I was 15 years old someone had said, 'You will eventually be allowed to write and draw your own comic', I would have thought it a dream come true.




When it actually happens to you in your adulthood, you have to deal with the reality of the responsibility, but it is still a dream come true. When I was a kid, I wrote and drew stories but no one was interested. Now I'm doing exactly the same thing but I'm being taken seriously.

I spent nine years in a warehouse labouring mindlessly but now I have a creative outlet. I am actually able to work when I want to work and to do what I want to do, and get paid for it.

There are a lot of down sides to it but in general it's everything that I wanted.

**CC: *I get the impression the money's a bonus.***

***Davis:*** I've always made sure that the wife and kids are taken care of but the money is never the prime directive. There are many more things in life far more important than money.

## ALAN DAVIS STRIPOGRAPHY

**Captain Britain**
Captain Britain (in *Marvel Superheroes 377–388*, Sep 1981–Aug 1982, by David Thorpe, except 385 by Davis (plot) and Paul neary (script); by Alan Moore from 387)
Captain Britain (in *The Daredevils 1–11*, Jan 1983–Nov 1983, by Alan Moore)
Captain Britain (in *Mighty World of Marvel 7–16*, Dec 1983–Sep 1984, by Alan Moore to 13, 14 by Steve Craddock & Davis; by Davis from 15)
Captain Britain (in *Captain Britain 1–14*, Jan 1985–Feb 1986, by Jamie Delano except 5 by Mike Collins & Davis; by Davis from 13. Mark Farmer inks on 14)

**The Origin of the Crusader**
The Origin of the Crusader (in *Rampage Monthly 41*, Nov 1981, by Davis & Paul Neary)

**Boots 'n Glove**
Boots 'n Glove (in *Amon Spek 5*, Dec 1981, by Davis)

**Star Wars**
Dark Nights Deviltry (in *Star Wars 153*, Jan 1982, by Steve Moore)
Rust Never Sleeps (in *Star Wars 156*, May 1982, by Alan Moore)

**Marvelman**
The Yesterday Gambit (in *Warrior Summer Special 4*, Sum 1982, by Alan Moore)
Marvelman (in *Warrior 6–11, 13–16, 18, 20–21*, Oct 1982–Jul 1983, Sep 1983–Dec 1983, Apr 1984, Jul 1984–Aug 1984, by Alan Moore. 6–7 inked by Gary Leach)
Saturday Morning Pictures (in *Marvelman Special 1*, Jul 1984, by Alan Moore)

**Harry 20 On the High Rock**
Harry 20 On the High Rock (in *2000AD 287–307*, 23 Oct 1982–12 Mar 1983, by Gerry Finley-Day)

**D. R. & Quinch**
D.R. & Quinch Have Fun on Earth (in *2000AD 317*, 21 May 1983, by Quinch [Alan Moore])
D.R. & Quinch Go Straight (in *2000AD 350–351*, 7 Jan 1984–14 Jan 1984, by Alan Moore)
D.R. & Quinch Go Girl Crazy (in *2000AD 352–354*, 21 Jan 1984–4 Feb 1984, by Alan Moore)
D.R. & Quinch Get Drafted (in *2000AD 355–359*, 11 Feb 1984–10 Mar 1984, by Alan Moore)
D.R. & Quinch Go To Hollywood (in *2000AD 363–367*, 7 Apr 1984–5 May 1984, by Alan Moore)
D.R. & Quinch Go Back to Nature (in *2000AD Sci-Fi Special 1985*, by Alan Moore)
D.R. & Quinch's Incredibly Excruciating Agony Page (in *2000AD 525–530, 532–534*, 6 Jun 1987–11 Jul 1987, 25 Jul 1987–8 Aug 1987, by Jamie Delano & Davis. Inked & coloured by Mark Farmer)

**The Hyper-Historic Headbang**
The Hyper-Historic Headbang (in *2000AD 322*, 25 Jun 1983, by Alan Moore)

**Laser Eraser & Pressbutton**
Brides of the Sluzzgreep (in *Warrior 21*, Aug 1984, by Pedro Henry [Steve Moore])
One of Those Days in Downtown Delta Five (in *Warrior 24–25*, Nov 1984–Dec 1984, by Pedro Henry)

**Batman and the Outsiders/The Outsiders**
Batman and the Outsiders (in *Batman & the Outsiders 22–32*, Jun 1985–Apr 1986, Mike W. Barr)
Adventures of the Outsiders (in *Adventures of the Outsiders 33–36*, May 1986–Aug 1986, by Mike W. Barr. Inked by Paul Neary, except 33 by Davis alone)

**New Mutants**
Why Do We Do the Things We Do? (in *New Mutants Annual 2*, 1986, by Chris Claremont)
Anything You Can Do ... ! (in *New Mutants Annual 3*, 1987, by Chris Claremont. Inked by Paul Neary)

**Batman**
Batman (in *Detective Comics 569–575*, Dec 1986–Jun 1987, by Mike W. Barr. Inked by Paul Neary, except 572 partly inked by Davis)
Full Circle (graphic novel, 1991, by Mike W. Barr. Inked by Mark Farmer)

**X-Men**
X-Men (in *The Uncanny X-Men 213, 215*, Jan 1987, Mar 1987, by Chris Claremont. Inked by Paul Neary)
Lost in the Funhouse (in *X-Men Annual 11*, 1987, by Chris Claremont. Inked by Paul Neary)

**It's a Mad Mad Mad World**
It's Mad Mad Mad World! (in *2000AD 509*, 14 Feb 1987, by Mike Collins)

**Cosmic Man!**
Cosmic Man! (in *Strip Aids*, 1987, by Davis)

**Excalibur**
The Sword is Drawn (in *Excalibur Special Edition*, Apr 1988, by Chris Claremont. Inked by Paul Neary & Mark Farmer)
Excalibur (in *Excalibur 1–7, 9, 12–17, 23–24, 42–now*, Oct 1988–May 1988, Jun 1989, Sep 1989–Dec 1989, Jun 1990–Jul 1990, Oct 1991–present, by Chris Claremont, except 16–17 by Claremont & Davis; by Davis from 42. Inked by Paul Neary. Inked by Mark Farmer from 42)

**Judge Dredd**
Bat Mugger (in *2000AD 585*, 30 Jul 1988, by John Wagner. Inked by Mark Farmer)

**She–Hulk**
Court Costs (in *Solo Avengers 41*, Jan 1989, by Chris Claremont. Inked by Josef Rubinstein)

**Maze Agency**
Mile High Corpse (in *Maze Agency Special 1*, Nov 1990, by Mike W. Barr)

**Black Night**
Shadow of a Doubt (in *Marvel Superheroes Winter Special 1990*, by Wright/McDuffy. Inked by Paul Neary)

**Wolverine**
Wolverine: Bloodlust (in *Wolverine Special*, 1990, by Davis & Paul Neary)

# CALLING ALL THE HEROES

## COMIC COLLECTOR TAKES A LOOK BACK INTO THE HISTORY BOOKS AND ASKS: WHERE WERE ALL THE BRITISH SUPERHEROES?

***In 1938 Superman was leaping to the rescue of an innocent girl, hurdling tall buildings and shaking crooks out of cars for the very first time in the pages of* Action. *Meanwhile in England . . .***

Tiger Tim and the Bruin Boys (Georgie Giraffe, Jacko Monkey and the rest of the gang) were still in shorts at Mrs Bruin's Boarding School. Chimpo was up to more monkey business at 'Chimpo's Circus'; Big Eggo, the Ostrich, was *Beano*'s 'Brainy Bird'; Laurel and Hardy were billed as 'the Screen's Cutest Couple', and the toughest character we had was Pansy Potter – the Strongman's Daughter!

American comic-books would never be the same again following the arrival of Superman: superheroes were popping up in every major city. By the 1950s you could hardly move for them; just about every animal that could bite had absorbed some mysterious radiation and bitten someone; masked heroes swore revenge on all criminals for the death of their parents, wives, children, friends, friends of friends, and anyone else they could think of; belts, hats, lanterns, capes, pendants, antique curios, ancient swords – there were a hundred-and-one ways of getting super-powers.

But there must be something wrong with this green and pleasant land because, when it came to superheroes, they were a bit thin on the ground.

Not that Britain has never had its defenders. Arthur Pendragon, of Camelot and round table fame, could rise again any minute, but can he leap tall buildings? Robin Hood was half-way there . . . well, he had the tights if you can believe the films, but there was never even a hint of X-ray vision.

British comics were still wearily treading the old path of chatty animals and cheery tramps through the War, but the superhero had arrived, shipped over as ballast in empty cargo ships and sold at market stalls for 2d a bundle. F.W. Woolworth's sold them for the same price.

Most of these bundles were Sunday supplements with specially drawn covers and titles like *Wags* and *Okay Comics*, but they brought Flash Gordon, Mandrake the Magician and other heroes to Britain for the first time.

American comic-books started to appear in the newsagents, but the War soon put a stop to all these imports.

> ROBIN HOOD WAS HALF-WAY THERE – BUT THERE WAS NEVER A HINT OF X-RAY VISION.

Enterprising publishers produced British Reprint Editions of popular titles like *Captain Marvel*, and American soldiers were sent comic-books that eventually found their way into the hands of new British fans who had been forced back to reading the adventures of Desperate Dan (and even that famous cow-pie eater was in Cactusville, and not his birthplace – Dundee!). But, however popular the superheroes were, there didn't seem to be any for Britain.

### X MARKS THE SPOT

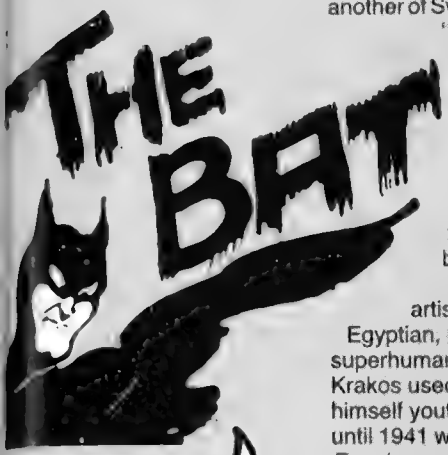
The earliest regular masked hero in British comics was the work of Scottish artist, Jack Glass, who created The Amazing Mr. X for *Dandy* in 1944. Mr. X was Len Manners, private inquiry agent, who was a good mixture of Superman and Batman.

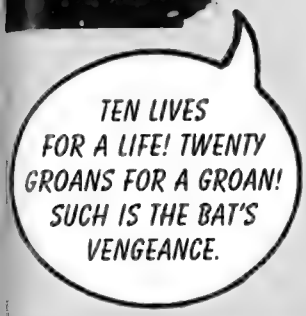
Hiding behind his horn-rimmed glasses nobody could imagine that during his investigations Len would slip home and take out some 'queer looking garments' as the text described them. 'He put on a pair of skintight trousers, a white jersey and black cloak. A final adjustment of his cloak, the fixing of a black mask, and he became the mysterious Mr. X, the terror of the underworld.'

Like Batman, Mr. X's power and strength came from training, and over the 13 episodes it appeared virtually everything he did was 'with a bound' or 'with a leap' – which was always a sure sign of immense strength.

But, even before Mr. X, Batman had already been the inspiration for another hero, one of the first to appear in this country. The Bat was the work of William Ward, an ex-animator who had worked on the short animated films of George Stoddy's cute dog, Bonzo, and later drew Donald Duck for the British *Mickey Mouse Weekly*. But his work for publisher Gerald Swan was a different kettle of fish entirely.

These were the days before the Comics Code in America and the Horror Comics Bill in Britain, and Ward wrote and drew some of the most violent comics of all time: mangled bodies and people slashed



in half were all part and parcel of his creations.

The Bat first appeared in *Thrill Comics 1* in April 1940, and again in another of Swan's comics, *Extra Fun*. "Ten lives for a life!" was his cry. "Twenty groans for a groan! Such is the Bat's vengeance!" Ward gave his own twist to the story, introducing a buoyancy ray to transport The Bat between crooks.

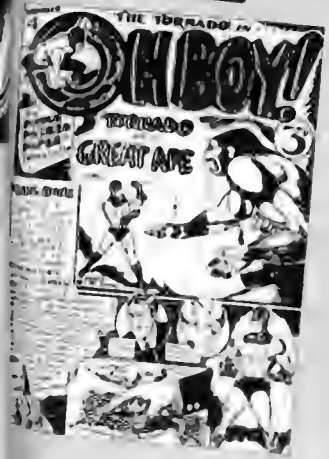
Ward was also the artist for Krakos the Egyptian, probably the first flying superhuman in British comics. Krakos used sacred herbs to give himself youth, sleeping in his tomb until 1941 when he appeared in *New Funnies*.

Funny he wasn't: "The angel of the burning death walks among you", he tells a group of Nazis in his first adventure, before transferring to *Thrill Comics* for further adventures.

A third strip introduced The Iron Warrior, a giant robot with a huge axe, which he puts to constant use: heads start flying, blood spurting, in scenes that only a few independent publishers would dare print, even today, for fear of attracting the wrath of protective parents.

Ward's work was characterised by his black sense of humour, and although he was not the greatest of adventure artists, the stories may one day get some measure of recognition for their boundary-stretching violence and lack of taste!

In the years soon after the War, Britain gained a few more superheroes: the independent publishers were far ahead of the larger combines in recognising the popularity of American comic-books and American superheroes. Scion Ltd., published countless small comics of all kinds, and can claim the credit for publishing the early work of Ron Turner and Ron Embleton, later to become two of the biggest names in British comics – and they had Jim Holdaway (later to draw the famous Modesty Blaise newspaper strip) on their staff.




It was Embleton who provided artwork to the self-penned Litening tale in *Big Flame Wonder Comic* (1948), and the anonymously drawn Maskman appeared in both *Big Dynamo Comic* and *Big Game Comic* (both 1948). Not to be outdone, rivals Martin & Reid hired Denis Gifford to edit *Amazing Comics*, which featured Captain Might, and later added Captain Zenith to their roster in *Captain Zenith Comics* (1950). The latter was the work of Mick Anglo, who would later create Britain's Mightiest Mortal – Marvelman.

Another Anglo creation was Wonderman, who appeared in the imaginatively titled *Wonderman*, and who distinguished himself from Superman by having a red costume and a blue cape – and a big 'W' on his chest just in case there was any doubt. The influence of Batman was still present: John Justice was described as an 'easy going wealthy good for nothing', but tearing his shirt off he reveals himself as Wonderman – the Atomic Marvel. Another shirt-ripper was Cyclone, although he didn't actually wear his costume underneath for his one adventure in *Dynamic* (1948). Cyclone was Ken Conway, owner of that burrowing marvel, the Earthship, a mole long before Hiram Hackenbacker invented a similar looking device for International Rescue.

## THE MIGHTY TORNADO

Wonderman's companion comic, *Oh Boy!* featured Tornado, a Flash lookalike in a red mask, red gloves and boots, although the lightning symbol was replaced by a large 'T'. Steve Storm, the reporter hero of the strip, had an interesting way of becoming Tornado – he just had to think about it, or rather 'exert his mighty will' to 'call upon the power of his great ancestors', his ancestors having been cursed back in the fifteenth century, a secret Steve kept from his fellow reporters on the *London Tribune*.

An equally intriguing secret was the identity of Tornado artist 'Ramon', otherwise Bob Monkhouse, later to become famous as host of numerous TV games shows, but at the time a prolific artist and editor for independent comics.

The recent success of The Rocketeer wasn't to befall Ray Spede – the Rocket Man, who took to the skies in 1948 on the cover of *Red Flash Comic*. Only two issues appeared, but it was long enough for Ray to test out his new rocket-ornithopter, save a young girl and rescue her brother, save a train from crashing into a van, save the driver from being killed by the train, and capture two ruthless gangs of crooks!

The Amalgamated Press, the biggest publisher of comics at the time, had long found that space adventures were highly popular with readers, and managed to put more schoolchildren in space than anyone, but they finally came up with their own hero in the shape of Thunderbolt Jaxon, who ran for seven weeks in *Comet* in 1947.

Young Jack Jaxon was the owner of the belt of Thor, and just buckling it on gave him all Thor's might and magic. Jaxon was the work of noted artist Hugh McNeil, equally at home with adventure strips or the 'funnies', and although nowadays his artwork seems crude, it was highly influential at the time. Jaxon later became Johnny Sampson when he was reprinted, and his enormous strength was certainly capable of bringing the house down, although in the 1940s the average hero was as likely to be found beating up dinosaurs as catching crooks.

It wasn't until 1954 that Britain would get its best-loved hero, Marvelman, the World's Mightiest Mortal, but – as they say – that's another story.

## COLLECTING BRITISH SUPERHEROES

There has always been a strong collecting interest in science fiction and superhero titles from the post-war decade, but copies of comic-books from the pre-Dan Dare era are now a rare commodity.

When they do come on the market they're snapped up quickly, so if you want to explore the world of British superheroes expect to pay a premium.

Many of these titles were printed in two colour photogravure which makes them doubly attractive, but 40 years on they often appear with a number of common faults, particularly rusty staples which eat into the pages.

Because of their rarity it is best to check with dealers as to whether they stock early British material, and since no one dealer deals exclusively in this area we advise you check our dealer listings.

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# BATMAN PREVIEW EXCLUSIVE

***Comic Collector is pleased to exclusively present a preview of the new ongoing Batman title,* Batman: Shadow of the Bat, *as well as a selection of pages from the two prestige format specials,* Catwoman Defiant *and* Penguin Triumphant. *Our thanks to everyone at DC for giving us (and you) a chance to see these pages – coming to a comic store near you in May/June.***

Penguin Triumphant *by John Ostrander, Joe Staton & Robin Smith*

**OUR PREVIEW OF THE NEW COMIC STRIPS . . . EXCLUSIVE!**

# SCARY MONSTERS!!

## MIKE KIDSON TAKES A LOOK AT 40 YEARS OF POPULAR HORROR COMICS

***On the racks of today's comics shops the horror fan will find plenty of titles to suit his or her taste, be it psychological horror, movie monsters or out-and-out splatter stories.***

***Curiously, the casual browser might have a little difficulty distinguishing some of them from superhero books, at least by title alone:*** **Tomb of Dracula** ***and*** **The Vampire Lestat** ***are obvious enough, but*** **Hellraiser, Sandman** ***and*** **Hellblazer** ***don't immediately evoke nightmarish images. Nor, to anyone unfamiliar with movies, do*** **Aliens** ***or*** **Predator** ***– and one apparently obvious title,*** **Swamp Thing,** ***is more a macabre superhero book than a horror comic.***

***There are reasons why publishers might be coy about openly advertising the 'nasty' nature of some of their wares, reasons derived from the chequered history of the American horror comicbook.***

In the early days of comics, horror was a rarity: the American public, faced with the real-life horrors of Hitler's rise to power, the Second World War and the post-war recovery, had little desire for fearful fiction. Most comics produced between 1938 and 1956 – the 'Golden Age' – served up humour, heroic action and wartime propaganda. The horror boom did not begin until 1950, after which it expanded until public outcry resulted in its overnight collapse (and the beginning of the end of the Golden Age).

Ironically, public opinion was levelled at the violence of many of the inferior comics being produced, rather than at the subversive content of the three clear leaders in the field, EC's *Tales from the Crypt, The Haunt of Fear* and *The Vault of Horror.*

EC publisher and mastermind William M. Gaines, a fan of horror fiction rather than of films, produced three titles from which vampires, wolfmen and so on were notably absent. The only monsters regularly to be seen were three cackling, misshapen 'hosts' – the Crypt Keeper, the Old Witch and the Vault Keeper. Their roles were multiple, and sophisticated for the time: apart from offering monstrous appearances designed to entice fans of movie horror, they directly addressed the reader with gleeful innuendo and horrendous puns which invited a kind of complicity in the proceedings, and provided links between the several short tales typically contained in each issue. Visually, they were the most macabre thing about EC's titles.

The stories they introduced commonly dealt with domestic horror: husbands, wives, lovers and siblings obsessively plotting each others' deaths; businessmen killing for profit; young slaying old for inheritances. The killers rarely escaped retribution, usually at the hands of their victim's decaying corpse!

Carefully written by Gaines and editor Al Feldstein, with occasional contributions by science fiction author Ray Bradbury, and with some of the finest artwork of the time provided by greats like Jack Davis, Graham Ingels and Joe Orlando, the EC horror comics presented a forceful critique of America's most hallowed social institutions to a juvenile audience.

> "THEY RARELY ESCAPED RETRIBUTION, USUALLY AT THE HANDS OF THEIR VICTIM'S DECAYING CORPSE"

## CLAMPDOWN

EC's product was genuinely subversive. The many inferior imitations spawned by their success, however, were often merely brutal. And the few adults who paid attention to what their children were avidly reading proved incable of telling good from bad. In his influential book *Seduction of the Innocent*, Fredric Wertham argued that images of violent actions should be prohibited because children imitate them! Wertham's theories panicked American parents and even provoked a Congressional inquiry into comics.

In the ensuing chaos, scores of publishers collapsed and those left voluntarily drew up a code restricting what could be depicted. Supported by the major distributors and with the establishment of an independent scrutinizing authority, the Comics Code came into force in late 1954. By the spring of 1955, EC had cancelled the last of their horror titles.

EEA

"I THINK HITLER WAS A BEGINNER COMPARED TO THE COMIC BOOK INDUSTRY." (Dr Fredric Wertham author of Seduction of the Innocent.)









Curiously enough, it was in 1955 that Hammer Films scored their first success with *The Quatermass Experiment*, a distinctly horrific science fiction yarn adapted, significantly, from a BBC series. Two years later they made an enormous profit from *The Curse of Frankenstein*, the first colour horror film which, for the time, was extremely gory.

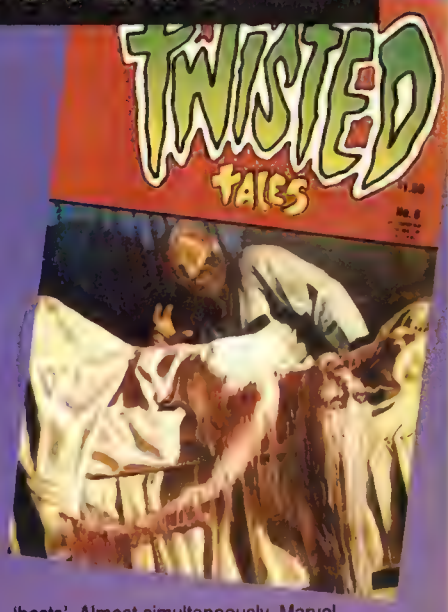
With a new boom in the cinema, and horror shows appearing on American television, the social climate was becoming amenable to fear once again. Even so, it wasn't until 1964 that independent publisher Jim Warren decided to try out a horror comic. Edited and written by Archie Goodwin and drawn by EC veterans such as Wally Wood, Reed Crandall and Jack Davis, *Creepy* was an instant success and Warren quickly put out a companion magazine, *Eerie*.

To keep up the flow of stories, Warren began to hire young artists like Neal Adams and Berni Wrightson, and throughout the 60s, his magazines provided useful experience for new talent. Despite the presence of EC artists in the early years, they differed greatly from Gaines' 'realistic' titles. Warren favoured stories influenced by the work of fantasy writers like H. P. Lovecraft: dreamlike tales in which humans were confronted with dark, chaotic forces returned from the forgotten reaches of prehistory.

"ALL CHILDREN, EVEN THE HARDIEST, SHOULD BE PROTECTED FROM THE TYPE OF COMICS MAGAZINES WHOSE PAGES DRIP WITH HORROR AND BLOOD."
(Dr Josette Frank, Child Study Association of America, 1969.)

Warren Publishing was able to evade the Comics Code because their horror titles were black-and-white magazines, priced for, and sold to, an adult audience. Four-colour comics contained no genuine horror until the end of the 60s, when the Code's power, weakened by distributors' blanket acceptance of titles published by National (later DC), Archie and Marvel, began to be tested.

In 1969, editor and ex-EC artist, Joe Orlando, took on two old National titles, *House of Secrets* and *House of Mystery*, transforming them into bloodless imitations of the EC comics, complete with several stories per issue and a pair of 'hosts'. Almost simultaneously, Marvel entered the field with the fantasy-orientated *Chamber of Darkness*. Both companies called on the services of Warren talents Adams, Wrightson and Barry Windsor-Smith.




Not to be outdone, Warren launched what was to be the most memorable of his titles. *Vampirella* took advantage of its freedom from the code restrictions under which Marvel and National still laboured, and added a sex element to the Warren fantasy-horror formula. But Warren's monopoly on horror comics had come to an end; although *Vampirella* continued until well into the '80s, the colour comics retained the services of the best horror artists around.

**CODE OF THE COMICS MAGAZINES ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.**

The Comics Code Authority was a self-regulatory body founded as the direct result of a Senate Subcommittee investigating juvenile delinquency in America. Comic books were seen as a prime motivator for juvenile crime, and the Comics Code appeared from October 1954 on many titles to indicate that the comic contained material that did not break any of the Code's standards. Those directly relating to horror comics were contained in Part B of the General Standards:

1) No comic shall use the word 'horror' or 'terror' in its title.
2) All scenes of horror, excessive bloodshed, gory or gruesome crimes, depravity, lust, sadism, masochism shall not be permitted.
3) All lurid, unsavory, gruesome illustrations shall be eliminated.
4) Inclusion of stories dealing with evil shall be used or shall be only where the intent is to illustrate a moral issue and in no case shall evil be presented alluringly nor so as to injure the sensibilities of the reader.
5) Scenes dealing with, or instruments associated with walking dead, torture, vampires and vampirism, ghouls, cannibalism and werewolfism are prohibited.

Not that they produced much of interest. As the 70s slid into economic recession, both DC and Marvel attempted to revitalise sales by trying out all sorts of new concepts, few of which lasted. Both companies followed trends set by television and the cinema, so it wasn't surprising that the enormous success of *The Exorcist* in 1973 triggered off a slew of uninspired and shortlived horror titles. In fact, the two most memorable horror comics of the decade had begun the year before: Marvel's *Tomb of Dracula* carefully and satisfyingly updated Bram Stoker's character, and DC's *Swamp Thing*, developed from a short story produced for *House of Secrets* by Berni Wrightson and scripter Len Wein, offered some genuinely disturbing tales of a monster in search of his lost humanity. Marvel's somewhat similar *Man Thing* also had some good moments, enhanced by the grotesque art of Mike Ploog – but for the most part, the horror titles of the 70s didn't exactly keep anyone awake at nights.

## CHANGES

At the beginning of the 80s, the nature and content of the comicbook marketplace began to change. For a quarter of a century, market conditions had relegated horror comics to a lowly status; large scale publishers and a few small companies had conformed to the Code's restrictions, despite its increasing ineffectiveness, while independents like Warren had been few and far between. But during the 70s an increasing number of specialist comic dealers had opened shop, providing scope for a new kind of distribution system which bypassed the news-stands entirely, and enabled publishers to reach an audience without first going via the Code Authority.

New companies arose, attracting major comic creators by offering them ownership rights to their creations. For the first time in decades, Marvel and DC had serious competition to deal with. They alone still observe the Code, relying on news stand sales for their market supremacy; in keeping with this they have, with few exceptions, abandoned horror comics.

Paradoxically, DC discovered they could defy the Code and survive when their revival of *Swamp Thing* was turned into the most effective horror comic for decades by British writer Alan Moore and artist Steve Bissette. The Code Authority refused to approve the title's direction, but DC continued to put it out anyway and its news-stand sales continued to grow.

"THE HORROR TITLES OF THE 70S DIDN'T EXACTLY KEEP ANYONE AWAKE AT NIGHTS"

Mindful of their juvenile audience, DC did not choose to abandon the Code; instead, they developed a compromise strategy, developing 'Mature Readers' titles to compete in the specialist shops. *Swamp Thing* became one of the first of these. Marvel's subsidiary Epic line used the same tactic, and it's into these categories that current horror titles such as DC's *Sandman* and *Hellblazer* and Epic's *Hellraiser* fall.

The comics surveyed so far have related to various traditions in other media, such as the literary tradition of Edgar Allan Poe and Arthur Machen, the 30s Hollywood monster films or the fantasies of H. P. Lovecraft. However, today's horror comics like *Hellraiser* and *The Vampire Lestat* are inspired by the works of new and prolific horror authors. The older literary influences which shaped EC and, through it, most horror comics thereafter have become a thing of the past; the literary angle of human inhumanity is still with us, but it has been updated.

The same trend is evident in current company-originated titles. In *Sandman* Neil Gaiman combines a fully realised dreamworld with examinations of human depravity which would not be out of place in bookshops, while Jamie Delano converted occultist John Constantine into an existentialist wanderer in the pages of *Hellblazer*.

Similar modernisation has taken place in those comics aligned towards cinema. Although Marvel still publish their company owned *Dracula* title, the numerous adaptations and spinoffs of *Aliens* and *Predator* and *Nightmare on Elm Street* are more prominent and more exciting. They, *Child's Play*, *Lestat* and many other horror comics currently on the racks, are published by independent companies. They are also licensed properties.

Which leaves the future of what is now a very healthy subdivision of the comics publishing industry in some doubt. Licensing of popular film and TV properties has enabled many independent companies to compete successfully with the aggressive marketing policies used by DC and Marvel. It has also ensured that modern horror comics are no longer just influenced by productions in other media – they are directly connected to them and to their success. If the public eventually grows tired of the adventures of Chucky, *Child's Play* comics will disappear along with the films; if novels by Clive Barker and Anne Rice cease to be bestsellers, so will the comics based directly on their work.

Company owned titles like *Sandman* and *Hellblazer*, however, have a better chance of survival: as the whims of public taste change older characters have the chance of revival (for example, Marvel's forthcoming revival of Jack Kirby's *Morbius the Living Vampire* from the pages of Spider-Man).

But the companies owning their own properties are the older, more conservative ones whose markets are founded on sales to juveniles and the ambivalence of the titles on their horror comics suggests that they have not forgotten the years when such things were taboo.

For all the proliferation and seeming prosperity of the genre, the bland, safe policies of yesteryear may yet return to cast horror comics back into limbo.

***Mike Kidson is the co-editor of Zum!, the first magazine ever to deal specifically with British small press comics.***

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MONTH'S GUEST REVIEW

## ALPHA FLIGHT #106

*by Scott Lobdell, Mark Pacella & Dan Panosian. Marvel Comics. $1.75*

Where to begin.

Well, this particular issue of *Alpha Flight* (Marvel's Canadian mutant super-group) has received more attention from the non-comics press than any comic for a long time, because this is the issue in which the first Marvel hero "came out", publicly declaring his homosexuality. The media attention certainly seems to have created interest or at least curiosity in the general public and sales of the issue were higher than is usual for the title. A second printing is currently available.

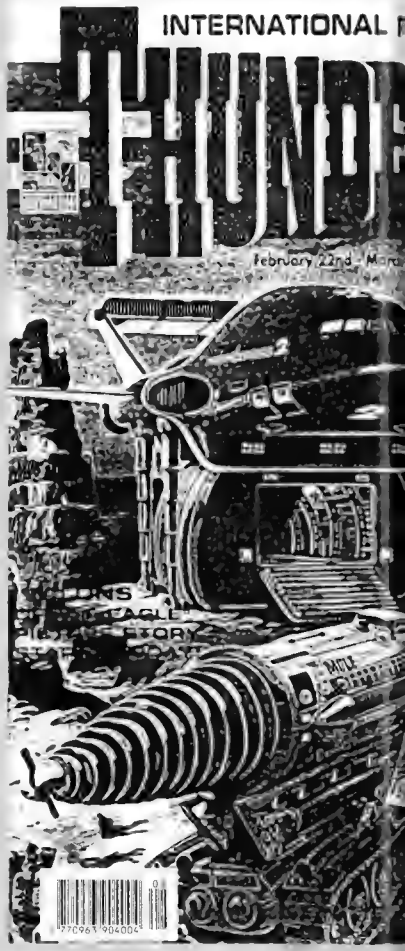
To summarise the plot: Northstar finds an abandoned newborn baby girl and rushes her to hospital, where she is later diagnosed as having contracted AIDS from her mother. Alpha Flight then use their fame to initiate an AIDS-awareness program based around the dying baby. Meanwhile, an elderly superhero, Major Mapleleaf (who dresses as a mountie), comes out of retirement and attempts to kill the baby (he is resentful because his gay son died of AIDS, but received none of the sympathy or attention heaped on the little girl). There follows a traditional seven-page superhero slugfest, during which Northstar reveals that he is himself gay; the story ends some time later as the baby dies and Major Mapleleaf and Northstar are united by their individual losses.

The first thing that strikes me is that the media attention was out of all proportion with the importance of the event. Whatever journalists may say, homosexuals are far from unknown in comics. Many examples can be found in the independents, while DC have featured several sympathetic gay characters. As to Northstar himself, regular Alpha Flight readers tell me that the character's homosexuality was never in doubt, just treated in a more low-key manner (giving the lie to the cover's banner: "Northstar as you've never known him before!")

The second thing is that this is a very poor comic. However noble the intent – presumably of raising awareness of gay characters, and featuring one more prominently in a superhero comic – the execution is horrible. The script manages to be overblown and boring at the same time, and while I've seen worse layouts, the inks are thin and scratchy and the colouring slapdash and weak. Most of the dialogue is pompous, melodramatic stuff, and the nub of the story – a series of pontifications on the nature of guilt and responsibility – is delivered by the two main characters over seven entire pages while smashing each other around the head. Now, I'm a comics fan from way back. I read superhero comics regularly, and *I* couldn't find the conditions of this exchange anything but laughable. What would an outsider think?

### "WHATEVER JOURNALISTS MAY SAY, HOMOSEXUALS ARE FAR FROM UNKNOWN IN COMICS"

Which is the third point. Any non-fan who decided to investigate their local comic shop, who thought that maybe comics really *had* grown up, would pick the comic at the centre of the publicity and find all their prejudices about comics amply reinforced. Obviously, any effort to widen the content of mainstream comics is to be applauded but an attempt like this, full of unlikely characterisation, melodramatic gestures and stilted, impossible dialogue, is doing nobody any favours.




## FROM AARGH! TO ZAP!: HARVEY KURTZMAN'S VISUAL H

*by Harvey Kurtzman with Michael Barrier. Prentice Hall Press, $25.00*

This glossy, oversized softcover is a brief history of comic books from the late thirties to the present day and is very much a personal view by Harvey Kurtzman, himself a significant influence on the medium's development. I say the history is brief, but this is only because Kurtzman concentrates exclusively on what he regards as important in the history of the field – the singular creators, the outstanding titles and decisive turning points. There is no attempt to cover every creator, only those exceptional artists and writers who left the field significantly enriched and, as in Jules Feiffer's excellent book *The Great Comic Book Heroes*, the author doesn't generate text for the sake of it but what he does write is informative and perceptive.

Kurtzman's choice of creators includes Will Eisner, from the days of the Iger-Eisner shop to The Spirit (there is a full colour reprint of the first P'Gell story) and continues through the Golden Age with Bob Kane, Seigel and Shuster, Charles Moulton, Lou Fine, C.C. Beck, Simon and Kirby, Charles Biro, Dan Barry, Carl Barks and Walt Kelley. There are short sections on the rise of romance, crime, funny animal and western comics with a more generous chapter on the publications of EC (of course), including critiques and reminiscences of Wood, Davis, Severin, Kreigstein, Williamson and Frazetta. Kurtzman's own work is noted, including his partnership with Bill Elder on *Mad*, Goodman Beaver and *Little Annie Fanny* and their influence on the fledgling Underground and the strips of Shelton, Wilson, Crumb, Bode, Spain and Griffith.

Kurtzman touches on the Silver Age, the early 60s super-hero revival and the energetic early Marvels. Examples of the developing mainstream continue almost to the present, taking in the works of Moore, Miller and Sienkiewicz. In the final chapter, 'Comics as Art', Kurtzman looks

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## THUNDERBIRDS TO THE RESCUE/ THUNDERBIRDS IN SPACE

*by Frank Bellamy. Ravette Books, £3.99 each.*

BBC2's re-screening of the 1960's Thunderbirds TV show is currently evoking fond nostalgia in those who remember it from the first time around as well as delighting a whole new generation of children. The revival's success has resulted in the re-appearance of Thunderbirds comic strips, both in a bi-monthly comic and as a pair of comic albums.

The editorial content of *Thunderbirds: The Comic* is aimed firmly at the younger fan. There are coded messages for "FAB Agents", a page for young readers' drawings, competitions, a regular pull-out section (featuring an excellent detailed cut-away painting of an aircraft or vehicle by Graham Bleathman) and, of course, there are comic strips. The early issues contained only *TV Century 21* reprints, presumably because the title was launched with little time to commission new full-colour work, but original material is now regularly included. Issues 9 and 10 contain the first two instalments of a new serial, uncredited but with artwork signed by Keith Page. Although confined to single pages, the panel layouts are reminiscent of the classic *TV Century 21* strip but the artwork is an uncomfortable mixture of styles. The vehicles are quite impressively rendered (in fact, some of the panels look as though they may be lifted from earlier Bellamy strips) but the characters themselves are awkward and far less well realised. In drawing a full-colour Thunderbirds feature, Keith Page has an unenviable task; he is following in the wake of some of the very best British strip illustrators, notably Don Harley, Ron Turner and Frank Bellamy.

> *"THE TV CENTURY 21 COMIC STRIPS HAVE BEEN IGNORED TOO LONG AND RICHLY DESERVE REPUBLICATION"*

And the classic Thunderbirds reprints by Frank Bellamy are the best reason for buying this comic. Bellamy's characters are good likenesses but more realistically-proportioned, while the various vehicles are elegant and dynamic, often sleeker than their TV counterparts. Well-placed blacks, dramatic highlights and subtle watercolour and ink washes combine to produce lush but vigorous colour pages, perfectly suited to this sort of adventure strip (the reprints' colours seem a little weaker than in the originals but this could be my faulty memory). The 4-page Lady Penelope back-up reprints by Eric Eden are capable but uninspired by comparison.

The two soft-cover albums, *Thunderbirds To The Rescue* and *Thunderbirds In Space*, have excellent painted covers by Steve Kyte and are entirely reprint, each containing three complete Bellamy stories and a couple of Bleathman cut-aways from the past issues of the comic. Most of the strips have already been reprinted in the comic, too, which presumably indicates that the two formats are designed for different outlets.

Except for the efforts of devoted enthusiasts (see Engale's *Action 21* and *Century 21*), the *TV Century 21* comic strips have been ignored for too long and richly deserves re-publication. At 65p every fortnight the comic won't break the bank but at 48 pages on better paper, the albums represent comparable value with the added advantage of containing complete stories.

## DAVID CHELSEA IN LOVE #4 (of 4)

*by David Chelsea. Eclipse Comics, $3.50*

One type of title that is flourishing in the independent market is the autobiographical comic. Colin Upton's *Big Thing*, Dennis Echhorn's *Real Stuff*, Joe Matt's *Peepshow* and Ed Brubaker's *Lowlife* are some recent examples of an expanding genre pioneered by Robert Crumb and Harvey Pekar, comics featuring the creator and used by them as diary, anecdote or confessional. Many of these autobiographical strips, however, have almost exclusively emphasised their creator's fallibility and too often honesty has meant only the depiction of the creator in the worst possible light.

*David Chelsea In Love* is a refreshingly up-beat addition to the group, in which the hero – and therefore the creator – comes across a more endearing but no less candid character, able to laugh at his own weakness and indecision. The four issues in this series record Chelsea's various infatuations and affairs over several years and are punctuated with frustration, bad-timing and just plain mistakes; but rather than relating these events with bitterness, Chelsea instead creates a rueful celebration of a confused but interesting part of his life. The details of the central story (his recurring, on-off relationship with the fickle but fascinating Millie) are related with frankness and humour and not far into the story this reader felt he knew the characters well, recognised their flaws and actually cared what happened to them.

The artwork is uncluttered and well-rendered, with a strong Windsor McCay influence in the different line-weights. Chelsea has a good ear for dialogue and a nice way with facial expressions and gesture and though there are very occasional lapses in the flow from panel to panel, the storytelling is better than in many mainsteam titles and the characters far more interesting and authentic. I would recommend *David Chelsea In Love* as an example of a truly adult comic which is also a witty and engaging read.

TORY OF THE COMICS

to the future and discusses those comics that have opened up new territory in th medium, including *Love & Rockets*, *Ra American Splendor*, *Cerebus*, *Maus*, the works of Richard Corben and Peter Bagg and the European influence of Moebius, Torres, Pratt, Goscinny, Hergé and I

But the book is a self-declared "Visual History" and the illustrations are what makes it so immediately attractiv The oversized, glossy pages contain several hundred covers and page reproductions, mostly in colour and all of the highest quality.

Kurtzman's choice of what to include would be difficult to contest on grounds of excellence and he presents examples of some of the most significant works in comics history and pertinent notes on many of the greatest creators. As such, his book is a welcome alternative to the mass of formulaic volumes purporting to tell the history of comics and at under £17 it is probably better value than many.

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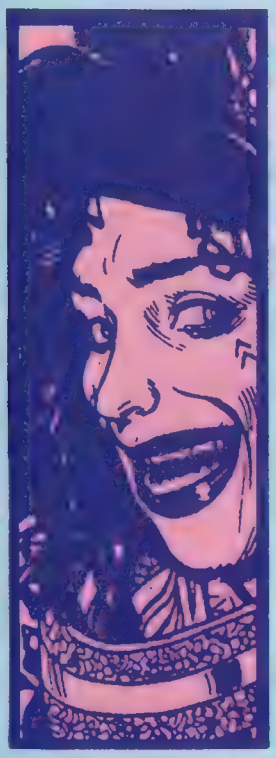


*Big things are happening at Marvel UK: the company that brought out Captain Britain of* Excalibur *fame is about to launch five interlinked comics featuring all-new material which, along with the new* Death's Head II *mini-series, will form the nucleus of a new British Marvel universe that has ties with the old American one.*

Marvel UK has always had one big problem: despite being the offshoot of America's biggest comic company and being relatively successful in the field of kiddie comics ('nursery' titles to the trade), it has always been unable to make a go of the one kind of comic that forms its parent company's bread-and-butter superheroes.

*Havoc, Meltdown, Death's Head, Knights of Pendragon, Dragon's Claws – the list of cancelled British Marvel adventure titles stretches on. Even Captain Britain, star of the top-selling Excalibur* comicbook, had to be sold to Marvel America before he hit the big time.

Yet now Marvel UK are all set to make their biggest stab yet at cracking the superhero market – only this time they're doing it on both sides of the

*Hell's Angel by Liam Sharp.*

**MARVEL UK'S NEW UNIVERSE IS ABOUT TO BE LAUNCHED IN OVERKILL. ALAN WOOLLCOMBE TRACKED DOWN PAUL NEARY AND JOHN FREEMAN FOR THE LOWDOWN ON GENESIS**

# GENESIS '92

Atlantic, and as part of the mainstream Marvel universe. What is going on?

Paul Neary, editorial director of Marvel UK and the man responsible for Marvel's entire British line, set the ball rolling: "I joined the company a year ago. When I came here, I looked at what projects were around, and one that seemed to make sense was the idea of a British weekly or fortnightly adventure comic with originated material. But before we did that, we wanted to try two reprint books with a content that I thought might interest the British readers."

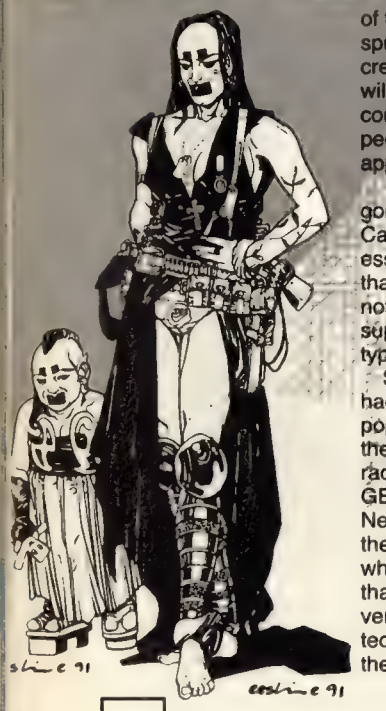
Thus *Havoc* and *Meltdown*, which featured high quality American Marvel superhero reprints: both flopped within months. Neary puts it down to the limited pool of readers for 'older' comics: "It had already happened to *Crisis* and *Revolver*, but we had to try with *Meltdown* to see what happened to us. There seems to be a hard-core older readership of about 30,000 people who read fanzines and go to comic conventions, and in the case of *Meltdown* this wasn't enough."

The experience didn't put Marvel off reprints altogether (after all, their superhero annuals feature reprints), but it did concentrate their minds on publishing an all-new British adventure comic. They would need to attract more readers and, if possible, lower their costs. A co-publishing deal, perchance? Better yet, how about being their own co-publishers, by selling the same material into both the American and British markets?

Which is where GENESIS '92 comes in. John Freeman, overall project editor, takes up the story: "GENESIS '92 is the new range of comics that Marvel in Britain will be producing for both the home and US markets, with a view also to foreign sales. With the exception of *Death's Head II*, which has already appeared, the characters will be first presented in a new, totally originated fortnightly British comic called *Overkill*.

*Overkill* will use five strips, which will be written specifically with the British audience in mind. These strips will then be packaged with additional material featuring American Marvel

*Art © Marvel Comics Ltd.*



superheroes and will be appearing as regular monthly Marvel US comicbooks."

The British characters themselves will be a mixture of fresh and familiar faces: "We will be using the characters from *Knights of Pendragon* and some of the background created in it as a springboard, but basically we are creating a totally new universe which will link in with Marvel mainstream continuity. On occasion you may see people from the Marvel universe appearing in the British comic."

However, these new heroes are going to be closer to Judge Dredd than Captain America: "Our characters are essentially streetwise and more gritty than most American heroes. They are not the costume-and-mask type superheroes, they're the leather-jacket type!"

Stan Lee's original Marvel universe had a thematic unity grounded in the popular concerns of the time (most of the original Marvel superheroes had radiation-based powers). So, do the GENESIS '92 strips devised by Paul Neary also have a common underlying theme? "I wanted it to be based in what's happening now. A lot of things that are happening are almost on the verges of mysticism through high technology, and I thought that was a theme I wanted to use."

The background to all the strips is a particularly nasty organisation called MyS-TECH (MyStical TECHnology). MyS-TECH is run by a board of eight old men and women who made a deal with a demon, Mephisto, for near-immortality and sorcerous powers.

*Above: Digitek by Dermot Power. Left: Warheads by Gary Erskine.*

Steeped in centuries of evil, they are trying to gain immortality by their own means and free themselves from service to the demon. They do this, in part, by employing – or stealing – high technology.

With this techno-mystical framework in place, Neary was able to set about creating six strips: "There were various concepts hanging around. The vampires in Vietnam type of stuff, I junked. Some were basically OK, like *Death's Head* and *Knights of Pendragon*, but outdated and in need of a savage revamp – Death's Head, for instance, I thought needed to be more in the *Predator/Terminator* kind of area than the Transformers-type mold that it was in. Then there were other projects in the offing which could be used as they stood or adapted to fit, and Digitek and Warheads were two of these."

The first strip to emerge from this new thinking was *Death's Head II*, a four-issue limited series. Written by Dan Abnett (of *Knights of Pendragon* fame) and drawn by Liam Sharp and Andy Lanning, the new Death's Head is an AIM robot from the future who kills his former self. Unlike the GENESIS '92 strips, *Death's Head II* will not be appearing in the British comic, *Overkill*.

Why not? John Freeman again: "The original Death's head was slated to appear in a four issue mini-series when Paul Neary got here, the revamp meant we had to begin again, while keeping to the idea of a mini-series. The extra work also meant we had to delay the shipping dates. Paul also decided not to publish it in the UK, but Death's Head II was a character we wanted to run with and one that the American market would recognize, so we were able to use him to trail our other GENESIS '92 material."

Marvel UK's confidence in Death's Head was shared by Marvel America, who chose to include him in their Big Guns promotion for the New Year. If sales live up to everybody's expectations (and issue 1 sold 196,000 copies, a record for any British Marvel title), the limited series will be fast followed by a regular title.

Pendragon II, like Death's Head II, is a remodelling of a previous Marvel UK comic, the *Knights of Pendragon*, which ran for 18 issues until being cancelled due to falling sales at the end of last year.

GENE

John Freeman fills in the details: "Pendragon II is being written by John Tomlinson and Dan Abnet, who of course both worked on the original *Knights of Pendragon*. It's drawn by Paul Gascoine, who is doing *Dragons* for Epic Comics. The characters are going to be the same as they appeared in the original series, they have established a base of operation but they are now pitted even more against MyS-TECH, who turn out to be behind the Bane and the Omni Corporation and all that went before, again with the same sort of ecological theme still running through it."

An unholy gleam appears in Freeman's eye: "If you thought that some of the things that happened in *Knights of Pendragon* were quite horrible and awful, just wait till you see what we've cooked up for this lot."

John Tomlinson also writes the third strip, Digitek, in conjunction with Andy Lanning. Painted by Dermot Power, this is another four-issue limited series that might lead into a regular comic if sales live up to expectations. Freeman is full of enthusiasm about the project: "It's all set in the digital world of cyberspace and virtual reality. Digitek is a computer-generated warrior, created when MyS-TECH's roving mercenaries, the Warheads, bring back

*Motormouth by Gary Frank*

a lump of living silicon. I'd better not tell you any more, but this is one of the American ones I'm actually editing, and I'm really looking forward to it."

Unlike Digitek, Warheads was an already existing group of characters that Paul Neary turned into mercenaries for MyS-TECH after the original proposal was presented. John Freeman again: "Warheads is about a group of mercenaries hired by the MyS-TECH organisation to drop down into wormholes in time and space – as in the nature of time – to find out what's there. If they find anything valuable or anything that might be scientifically useful to them, they bring it right back and it's then funnelled through one of MyS-TECH's many dummy corporations and put into the mass market.

"It's very fast paced – there are going to be a lot of people who will go down those wormholes never to return. That's the nature of the job and that's why they're paid so much money in bonuses and commissions, depending on what they bring back. It's going to be absolutely stunning stuff. It's being drawn by Gary Erskine, whose work you're already familiar with on *Knights of Pendragon*, and written by Nick Vince, who has been working for Epic on *The Nightbreed* and *Hellraiser* comics. They're doing some stirring stuff on that."

The strip closest to the centre of all MyS-TECH's machinations is Hell's Angel. Designed by Paul Neary and Bernie Jaye, who is writing it, and drawn by Geoff Senior. Hell's Angel is a young woman who succeeds her father on the board of MyS-TECH but who is in fact the traitor within.

John Freeman elaborates: "This particular book will feature most of what MyS-TECH are about: how they originated, who these people are, who they're linked with. We will also reveal some of the innermost workings of the MyS-TECH organisation, which Hell's Angel is working within to destroy. In that she is joined by various characters including the Angel of Death."

The final strip, Motormouth, also stars a female character, raw, brash and with no superpowers. John Freeman completes the rundown: "A streetwise 17 year-old off the street tries on a pair of teleportational dimension-surfing trainers. She is being tested by MyS-TECH to see if she can actually use these trainers – they don't work for everybody and she's the first person for whom they have worked at all.

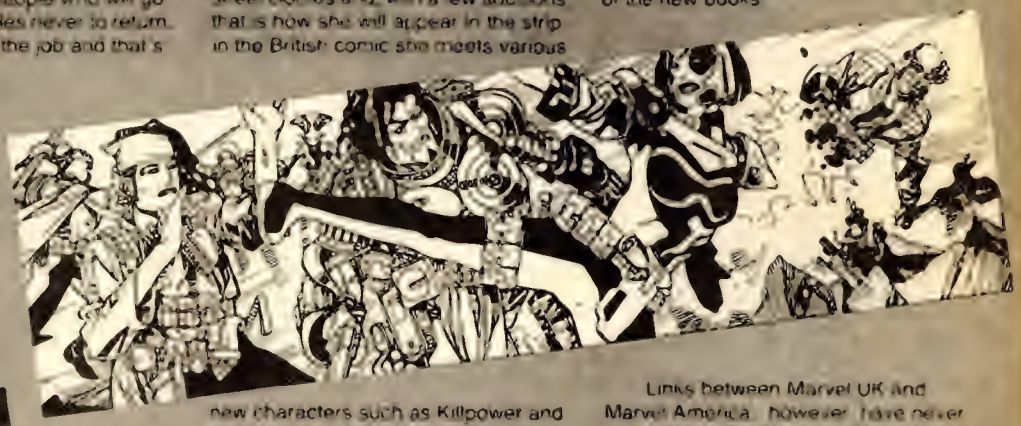
"She is there in her everyday street clothes and, with a few additions that is how she will appear in the strip in the British comic she meets various new characters such as Killpower and engages in weird dimensional hops to other planets and different dimensions, and in the American comicbook she comes up against other superhero characters – for example, she will be a guest star in the *New Warriors* comicbook. The writer on it is Graham Marks and the artist is Gary Frank who has worked with us before.

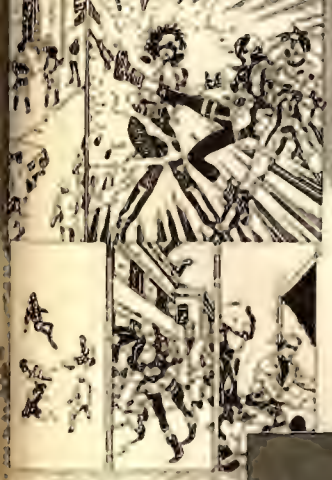
So much for the individual titles. On top of the strips appearing firstly in *Overkill* and subsequently in the American format, each individual American title will have a further twelve pages of new material featuring American Marvel superheroes.

However, with the clear connections with the mainstream Marvel universe, will there be any sort of tie-in with Marvel US's most obvious British success, Alan Davis's *Excalibur*? Editor Freeman demurs: "That's really up to discussions with the people who are working on *Excalibur*. There will no doubt be crossovers because both the *Excalibur* editor and Alan Davis will perhaps want to use some of the material that we've created and vice versa. I would certainly like to see us working towards that."

What about Doctor Strange then – with all this mysticism about, Earth's Sorcerer Supreme is bound to get involved, no? "The only tie-in so far with Doctor Strange is that the character behind MyS-TECH's demonic practices is Mephisto, and there we have the closest link that anything between the British and American markets will have. At the moment there are no plans for any crossovers in the early stages with any of the new books."

# SIS '92





Links between Marvel UK and Marvel America, however, have never been closer. Freeman is effusive in his praise of his American colleagues: "The people who have been very closely involved with the project from the Marvel US point of view have been very encouraging indeed and very helpful. People like Marvel's editor-in-chief, Tom DeFalco, and Mark Gruenwald [senior editor] who have been instrumental in keeping Marvel US comicbooks on the straight and narrow, have been giving us positive support all the way. Speaking from my own experience of working on *Death's Head II* obviously as an American comicbook we're using Marvel superheroes. The Fantastic Four appear in issue 2 and Ralph Macchio, the editor on that book, has come up with some very positive suggestions. We all seem to be talking the same language, which is great.

It seems a most churlish to ask after such an expression of brotherly love between the two branches of Marvel why Marvel UK has such confidence that its new line will fare any better than its predecessors, but editorial director Neary has a very simple answer: "There are no guarantees, obviously, but these new titles stand the best chance of succeeding because we are able to tap into the entire Marvel US network and because the money is coming back in from three separate areas: the British market, the American market, and the syndication market [ie. foreign language editions]. We have never had all that before, and we are in a far stronger position because of it."

**THERE ARE NO GUARANTEES**

## KNIGHTS OF PENDRAGON

***Knights of Pendragon, Marvel UK's previous attempt at an American-style comic book and the immediate ancestor of the new GENESIS '92 Pendragon II strip, was ironically cancelled last December after an eighteen issue run, due to falling sales. Dark rumours abounded that Marvel had other than financial motives for the book's demise, rumours Paul Neary is quick to squash: "I would like to say that the only reason Marvel cancels titles is when they start losing money. It just doesn't wash that books that make money are cancelled, and I imagine that almost any other publishing company does exactly the same thing. Paradoxically, one title we did keep going at a loss was Knights of Pendragon, where circulation had dropped from 70,000 to 11–12,000, because we wanted to round off the storyline neatly in case we wanted to revamp and re-use those characters later on, as indeed we have for the Pendragon II strip. I'm glad I did that: that was a case of us bearing with something that was costing us a little bit of money, in order to keep our act clean."***

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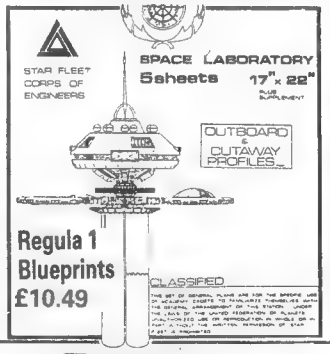


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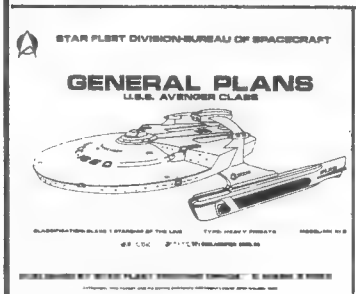


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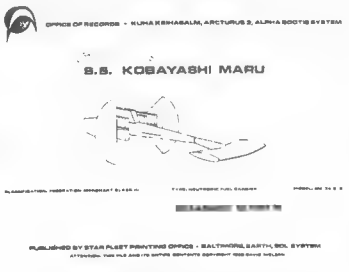


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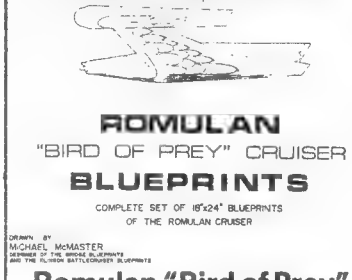


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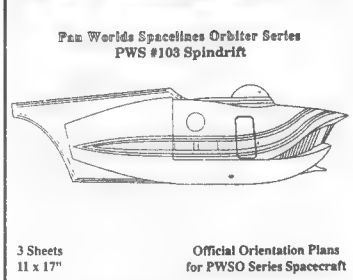
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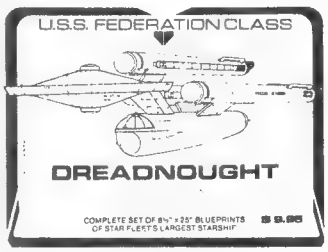


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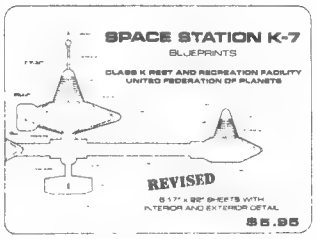


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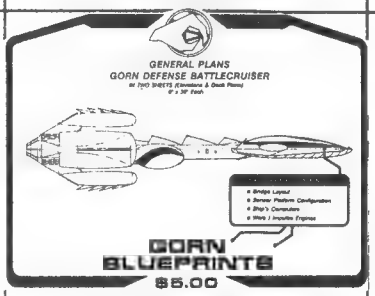


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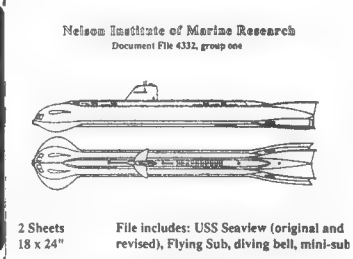
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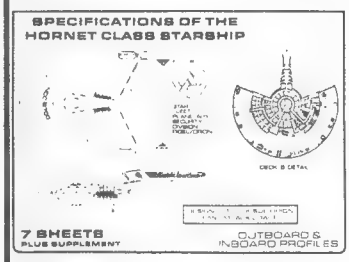


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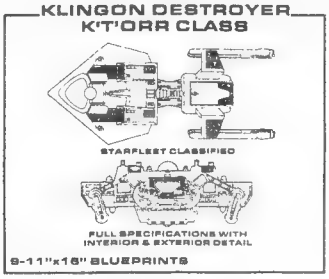


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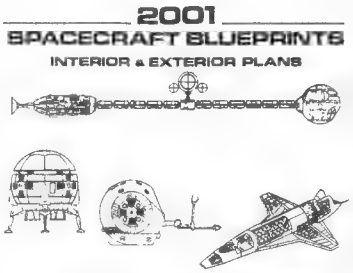


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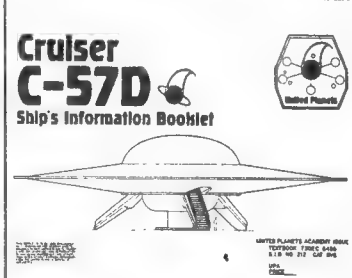


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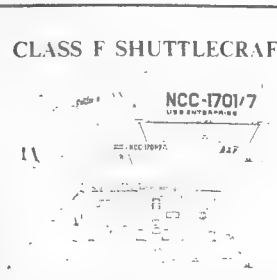


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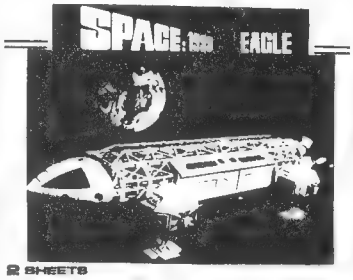


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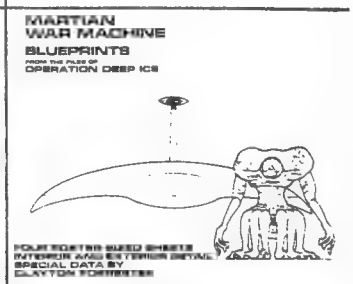


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# Collector's Gazette

## GOLDEN AGE GO MICRO

The American firm MicroColor International Ltd. and its British counterpart, MicroColour, are issuing sets of Golden Age comics on 6″×4″ high resolution colour microfiches.

Among the titles available are some of the most collectable and highly priced comics of all time, including *Action Comic 1* with Superman's first appearance, *Detective 27*, with Batman's debut, and *All Star 3* with the origin of the Justice League of America, now available at a fraction of the cost of an original.

Each microfiche is an exact reprint of an issue, including ads, letters, pages and such, and are offered in sets of five microfiches, priced £22.95 per set.

Reprints already available include: *Action 1–25, Adventure 103–127, All Star 1–10, Batman 1–50, Detective 1–50,* and *Superman 1–60* from National (DC), *All Select 1–10, All Winners 1–21, Captain America 1–50, Human Torch 2–25, Marvel Mystery 1–50, Mystic (1st series) 1–10, Submariner 1–25, U.S.A. 1–10* and *Young Tales 1–5,* all from Timely (Marvel).

*Archie 1–50, Hangman 2–8, Blackhood 9–18, Blue Ribbon 1–10, Jackpot 1–9* and *Pep 1–15,* published by MLJ/Archie, are also available at various prices.

MicroColour also produce a colour microfiche reader with an 11″×11″ screen which shows each microfiche page to its original size, priced at £195.00.

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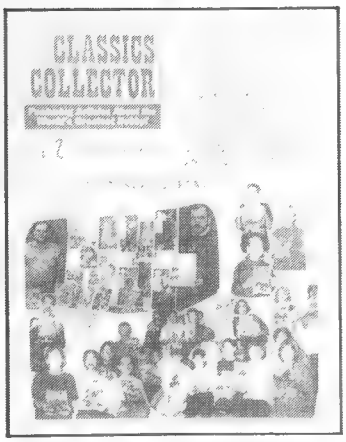
## CLASSICS COLLECTOR




Dan Malan's *The Classics Collector* is a 32-page magazine concerned with all illustrations and comic strips adapting classical novels, particularly the *Classics Illustrated* series published by Gilberton between 1941 and 1962 and reprinted throughout the world, making it possibly the most internationally collected comic book series of all time.

The latest issue, number 14, includes all the news from the hobby, appreciations of artist Jerry Iger, one-time art editor of *CI* and Roberta Strauss Feuerlicht, *CI*'s editor; articles on Mark Twain and the Ally Oop newspaper strip, British *CI*s, and a bibliography of Gustave Dore. A six-issue subscription is $13.00, or $19.00 overseas.

Malan is also the publisher of *The Complete Guide to Classics Collectables*, a projected five volume series, the first two of which have now been published: Volume 1 covers American *CI*s – noting every single variation of covers, art and HRN; the second volume does the same for foreign editions.

Both volumes have sold out their first printing, but second printings are available at $19.95 and $18.95 respectively. Limited hardback editions of both are also available, priced $39.95.

***Further information from Malan Classical Enterprises, 7519 Lindbergh Drive, St. Louis, MO 63117, USA.***

## THE ART OF LAUGHTER

"Many of the best cartoons offer more than amusement," says Cartoon Art Trust Chairman, Simon Heneage, and the proof can be found in the Trust's exhibition, 'The Art of Laughter', which opened at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, on February 18, and runs to May 24.

Drawn from the collections of cartoonists and collectors such as Sir Osbert Lancaster, Mel Calman, Nicholas Garland, John Jensen and Posy Simmonds, the exhibition was selected by Lionel Lambourne of the

## STRIP SEARCH

**Britain's biggest and best travelling exhibition, Strip Search 2, moved to a new home on March 12: the 20,000 square foot showroom of T. C. Farries, one of Britain's leading library suppliers.**

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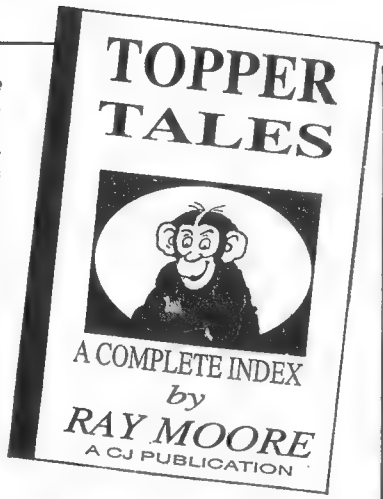
**The exhibition has already travelled extensively, but this**




# TOPPER TALES

Following hot on the heels of *The Beano Diaries*, Ray Moore's continuing project to index every D.C. Thomson comic takes another major step forward with the publication of *Topper Tales*, a complete index to Thomson's tabloid paper which was launched in 1953, the home of Dudley Watkins' Mickey the Monkey, and David Law's female menace, Beryl the Peril.

The large size of the comic made it an excellent home for adventure strips, and classic adaptations of 'Treasure Island', 'Kidnapped' and 'Robinson Crusoe' by Watkins are among the best published in strip form.

Other excellent strips by the likes of Paddy Brennan, Ron Smith (long before he gained recognition for his work on Judge Dredd), Albert Holroyd and Keith Watson kept up the adventure spirit. *Topper* was also the home for Ernie Bushmiller's Nancy for many years, as well as reprinting Fritzi Ritz for two years – an oddity in Thomson's almost all-British originated strip publishing.

The Index runs to 300 highly illustrated pages, and is an excellent companion to Moore's previous work. My only criticism is that there is no artist index this time, but it's a minor point in an otherwise faultless piece of research.

***Order from Bryon Whitworth, 17 Hill Street, Colne, Lancashire BB8 0DH.***

# THE FRANK BELLAMY APPRECIATION SOCIETY

The FBAS was founded in 1991 by Bill Storie, initially as a contact point for fans of Frank Bellamy. Over the past few months, enthusiasts have begun the task of compiling a definitive list of Bellamy's work both published and unpublished as well as locating as much original artwork as possible. The Society hopes to build up a centralised library of original artwork, or at least high quality copies taken from originals.

The Society is launching a newsletter, *The Gopherville Argus*, this April which will feature rare and unpublished artwork from the library, background material on Bellamy, articles, anecdotes, and interviews with artists who cite Bellamy as an influence. A big feature on Garth is already lined up, which will include an interview with John Allard, one time assistant to Garth creator, Steve Dowling, and currently cartoon editor for the *Daily Mirror*.

Bob Monkhouse, British TV personality and owner of the largest known collection of original Bellamy artwork, is Honorary President of the new Society.

***For more information send an SAE to Bill Storie, 5c Ainslie Place, Perth, PH1 5DG, Scotland.***

Victoria & Albert Museum, and *Punch* archivist, Amanda Jane Doran. The results are a representative selection of 20th Century cartoons featuring the work of 42 artists, ranging from Anton and Bateman to Vicky.

"We compiled the exhibition in an unusual way," says Lionel Labourne, "by asking several members of the Cartoon Art Trust to part with their own treasures. It is fascinating to see which artists have emerged as the cartoonists' cartoonist."

An 80 page catalogue, with commentaries, artists' biographies, and an introduction by art historian Sir Ernest Gombrich accompanies the exhibition, which is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm, Sundays from 2pm to 4pm. Admission is free.

***Further information from the Ashmolean Museum on 0865 278 042.***

**will be the first time it has been shown as the focus of a promotion of the medium to the library profession.**

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**Following that, the exhibition moves to The Cleveland Gallery, Middlesborough, April 4 to May 9.**

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**Trade Seminar, Thursday, March 26. Further information from Jane Collins on 0455 250 077.**

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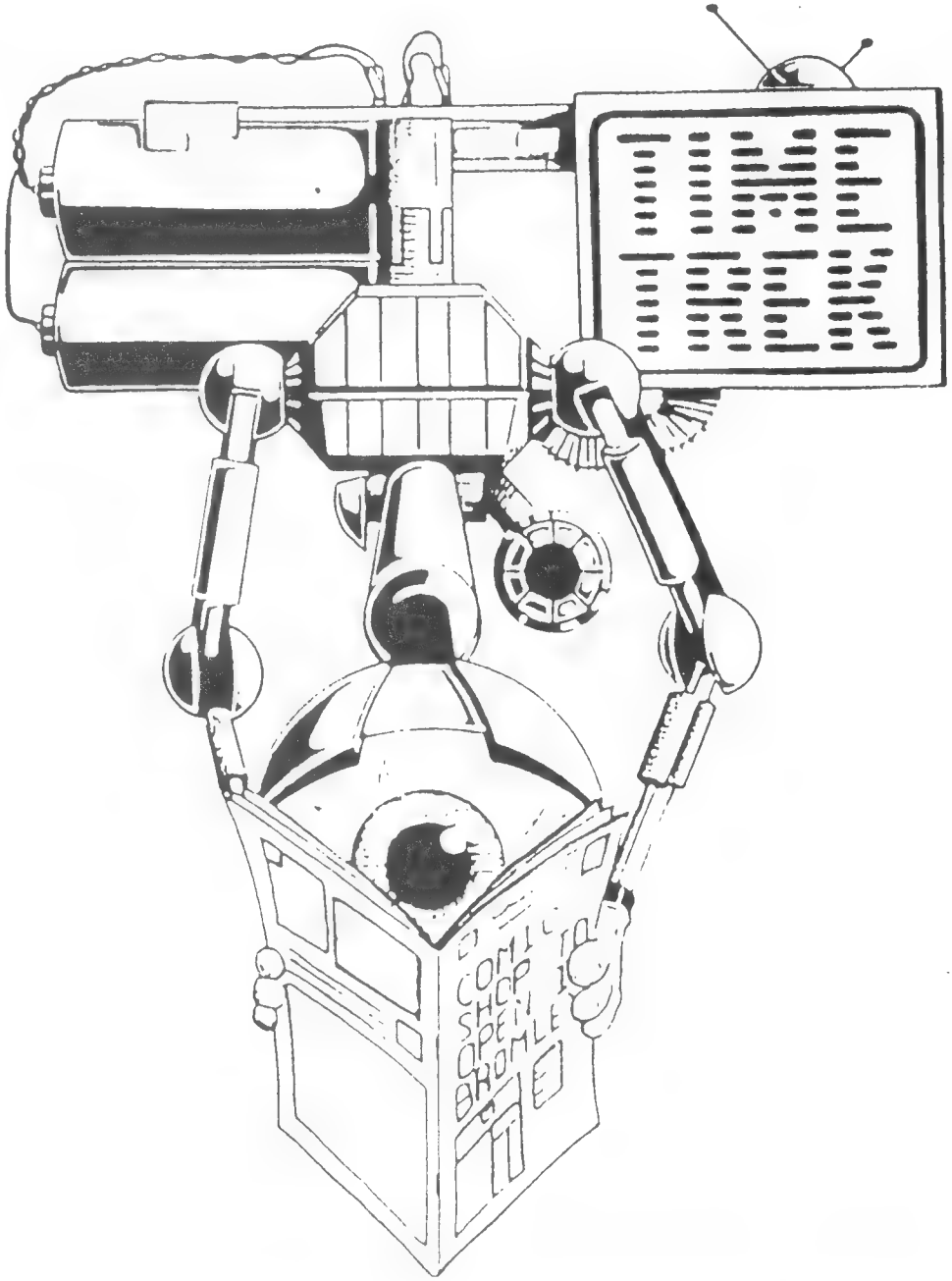

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# ENQUIRY DESK

**Q Is it true that Michael Moorcock wrote comic strips?**

*John Davey, Kent*

A Michael Moorcock has long been recognised as one of the leading exponents of the heroic fantasy novel, but he has never been a writer to be categorised, and his books have included straight science fiction, historical fantasies and comedy thrillers. His work has been recognised outside the SF and fantasy field, and his novel 'Gloriana' won the Guardian Fiction Prize. But, what is less known is that during the period 1957 to 1967 he was a prolific writer of comic strips and features for British comics.

Moorcock, born in London on December 18 1939, was a keen collector of boys' papers such as *Magnet* and *Gem* which were highly popular between the wars. His first self-published magazine appeared in 1951, entitled *Outlaw's Own*, and at the age of 15 he produced his first regular title, *Book Collector's News*, which dealt with boys' papers.

At 17 he was invited to edit *Tarzan Adventures*, a comic which featured reprints of the American newspaper strip interspaced with other strips drawn primarily by Spanish artists (notably Victor de la Fuente and Luis Bermejo). His first stories featuring the fantasy hero Sojan appeared here, and Moorcock's interest in fantasy and science fiction involved him in many fan-magazines and meetings.

Jet-Ace Logan
30
31
TWO SECONDS LATER ANOTHER SLIVER OF SILVER LIGHT FLECKED AWAY FROM THE GREAT METAL BULK OF THE R.A.F. SPACE-SHIP...
INTERCEPTOR CLEAR, SIR!
HE'S GOT TOO GOOD A START! I'LL NEVER CATCH HIM... BUT UNLESS HE SLOWS DOWN SOON, HE'S GOING TO BURN HIMSELF UP IN THE EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE!

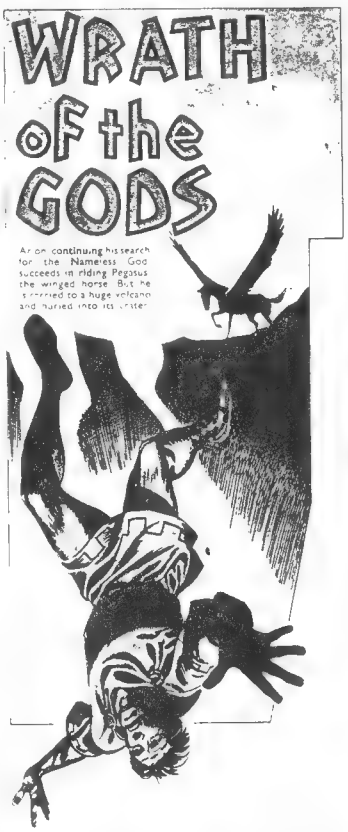
He edited *Tarzan Adventures* between 1957 and 1958, although he continued to contribute occasionally until 1959. At the same time he began writing comic strips for the *Cowboy Comics Library* and *Thriller Picture Library*: for the latter he penned adventures featuring space-hero Jet-Ace Logan, drawn by Kurt Caesar and Ron Turner among others. He also wrote for various annuals, including *Robin Hood Annual* and *Billy the Kid Annual* around 1960.

In 1962 he joined Fleetway Publications as a sub-editor of the *Sexton Blake Library*, but continued to produce comic strips, often for *Tiger* and *Tiger Annual*, where his stories included Olac the Gladiator, Mike Blade and the Atom Wreckers (1963), Castaways of Shark Island (1963–64), Danny Jones – Time Traveller (1964–67), The Ragged Racer (1965), Val Venture (1965–66), Nelson Lord (1965–67) and The Robot Builders (1966–67).

His best-known strip work was for *Boys' World* for whom he scripted 'Wrath of the Gods', drawn by Ron Embleton and later John Burns. Moorcock's contributions to that paper were mainly features such as 'Hand of Fate' and 'Would You Believe It', and an anonymous short story, 'The Mountain' (June 15 1963). One story, 'Time Drop' in *Boys' World Annual 1965*, was credited to Moorcock but was actually by fellow science fiction writer Barrington Bayley!

In 1961 Moorcock made his first sale to Edward Carnell, and 'The Dreaming City' appeared in the June 1961 issue of *Science Fantasy*. The hero of the story was the albino prince, Elric, who appeared in other tales, later brought together in short story collections and a series of novels.

Moorcock was a regular contributor to *Science Fantasy*, *Science Fiction Adventures* and *New Worlds* in the early 1960's, and when he left Fleetway Publications he hoped to launch his own science fiction magazine. At the same time, the publishers of the various fantasy magazines he was writing for decided to fold them because of poor sales. They were saved by a new publisher, and Edward Carnell recommended Moorcock as editor.




He took over *New Worlds* and *Science Fantasy* in 1964, and quickly established *New Worlds* as the home of the 'New Wave' science fiction writers, publishing the work of J.G. Ballard,

Thomas M. Disch, Samuel R. Delany and Norman Spinrad among many others. Moorcock was writing his own series, featuring Jerry Cornelius, a pop-art character who was taken on by other writers. His story 'Behold the Man' won the Nebula Award in America for best Novella in 1967.

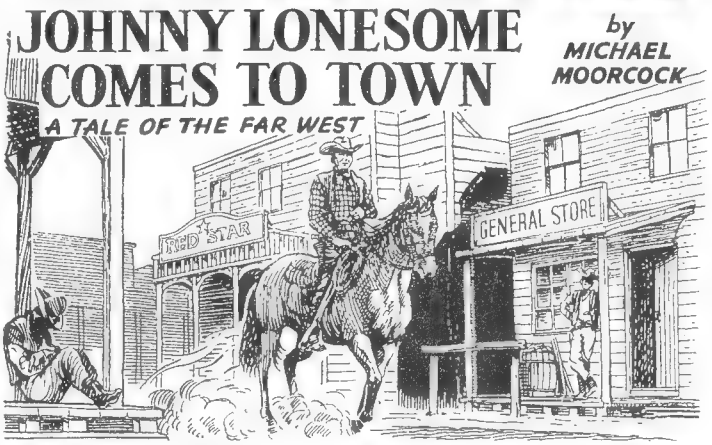
At the same time, Moorcock was writing a series of homages to Edgar Rice Burroughs' Martian stories under the pen-name of Edward P. Bradbury, and the Burroughs connection was further cemented when Moorcock scripted the film version of 'The Land That Time Forgot' (1975).

*New Worlds* did not sell well, and during the late 1960's and 1970's Moorcock wrote a great many popular fantasy novels, featuring among them Erikose the Eternal Champion, the Corum series, the Hawkmoon series, and many others. He used the money to keep *New Worlds* afloat until 1971, when it was switched to paperback format.

Of course, the increasing concentration on stories and novels meant that he dropped his comic script writing, but even in the early days of editing *New Worlds* he continued to pen strips like 'School for Spacemen' in *Champion* (1966) and stories for *Lion Annual*, *Tiger Annual* and *Valiant Annual*.

As late as 1977 Moorcock was invited to write 'Invasion' for *2000AD* which resulted in some correspondence in the pages of *The Guardian* newspaper; in more recent years a number of comic strip adaptations of Moorcock series have appeared, including two highly illustrated volumes from Savoy Books/Big O, 'The Jewel in the Skull' and 'Storm Bringer' adapted by James Cawthorn, and a series of Elric adaptations published in America by Pacific and First Comics, drawn by P. Craig Russell, Michael T. Gilbert, Jan Duursema, and Mark Pacella.

SOON THE GLEAMING SHAPE OF SEA-BIRD APPEARED, LOCKED TO THE HULL OF THE STRICKEN SUBMARINE..
THIS IS THE TRICKY BIT... STEERING INTO SEA-BIRD'S AIR LOCK!
ON TARGET!
DESPERATELY DAMON FLUNG OUT AN ARM, KNOCKING OVER THE AIR-LOCK LEVER BENEATH SEA-BIRD'S NOSE...
DONE IT! BUT IT WAS A MIGHTY CLOSE THING!




Moorcock has kept up a steady flow of novels, among the best being 'the Conditions of Muzak', which won the Guardian Fiction Prize, and 'Gloriana'.

"You think, perhaps, that I have lost my reason?"

In more recent years he has concentrated on a series of novels which tells the history of the 20th century, beginning with 'Mother London', although he has not forgotten his fantasy roots, and Elric continues to appear.

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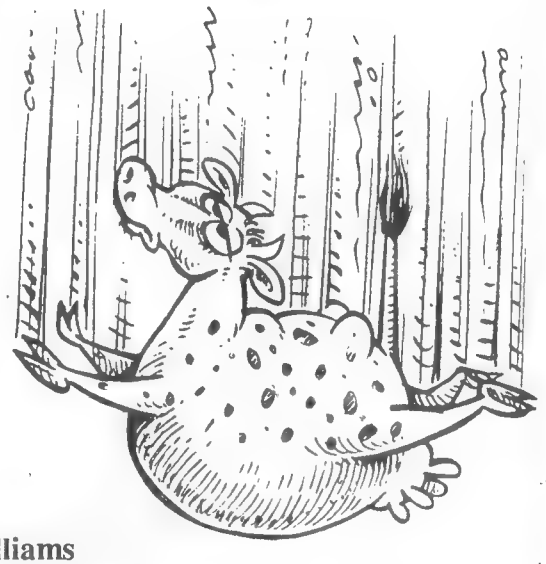

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|---|---|
| M. | Mint Perfect |
| N.M. | Nearly Mint |
| V.F./V.F.N. | Very Fine |
| F.N. | Fine |
| V.G. | Very Good |
| G | Good |
| F. | Fair |
| P. | Poor |
| B.S. | Bookshop Stamp on Cover |
| T.S. | Taped Spine |
| R.S. | Rolled Spine |
| M.C. | Marked Cover |
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| P.S. | Price Stamp |

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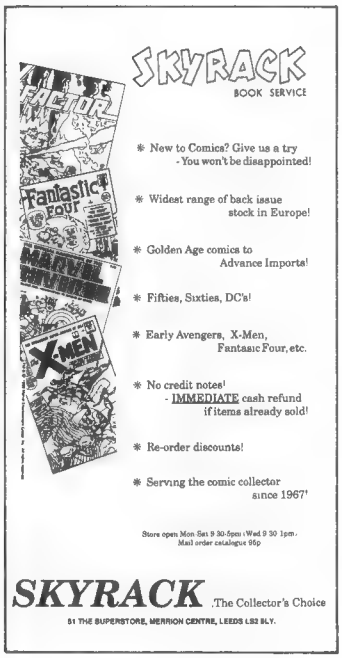
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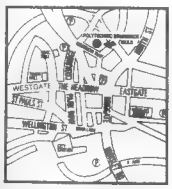

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| F.N. | Fine |
| V.G. | Very Good |
| G. | Good |
| F. | Fair |
| P. | Poor |
| B.S. | Bookshop Stamp on Cover |
| T.S. | Taped Spine |
| R.S. | Rolled Spine |
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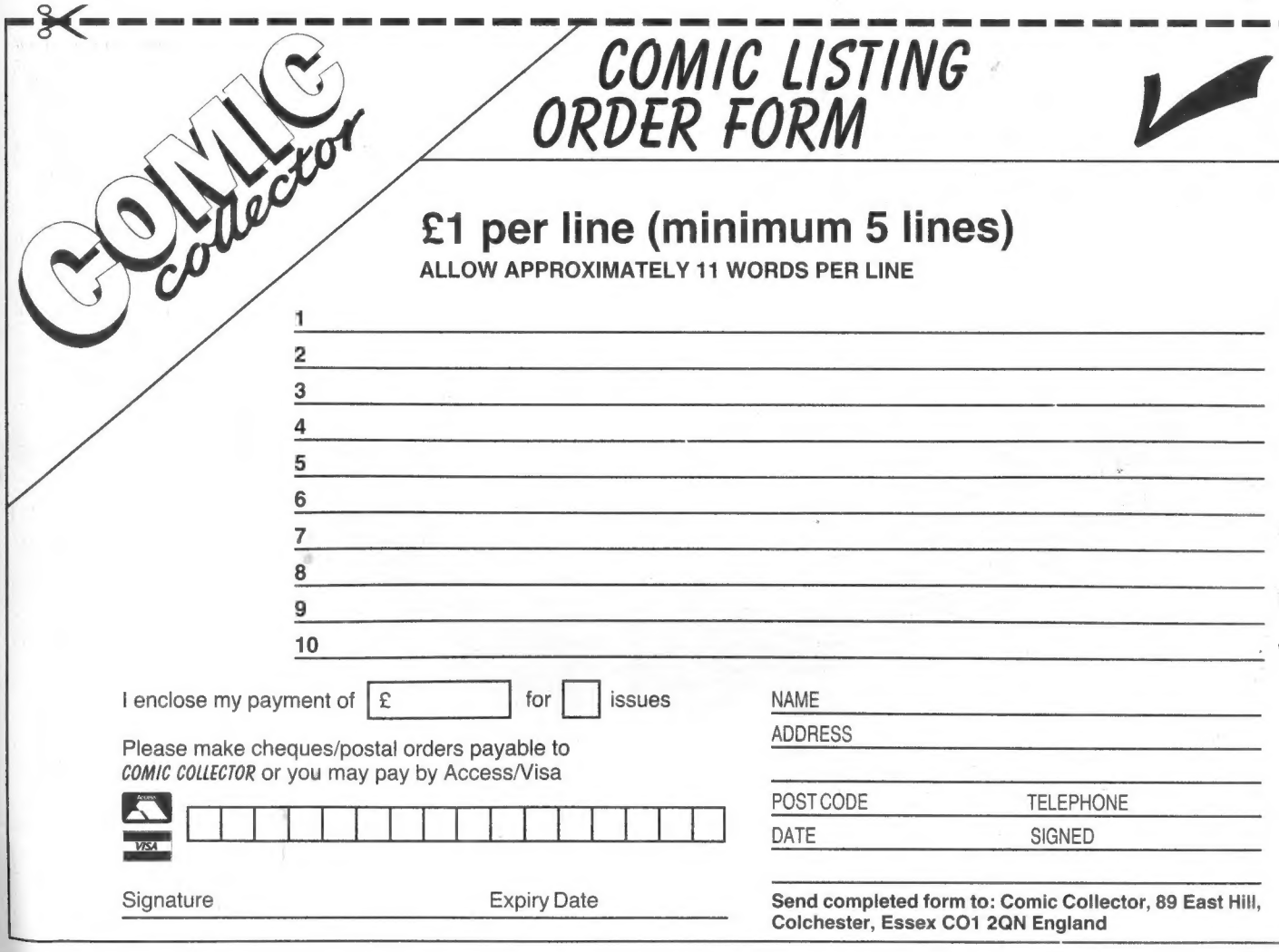

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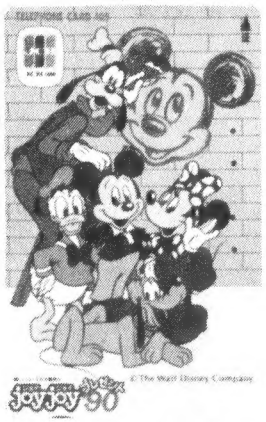

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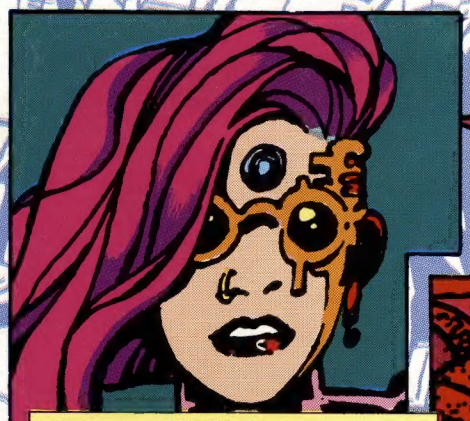

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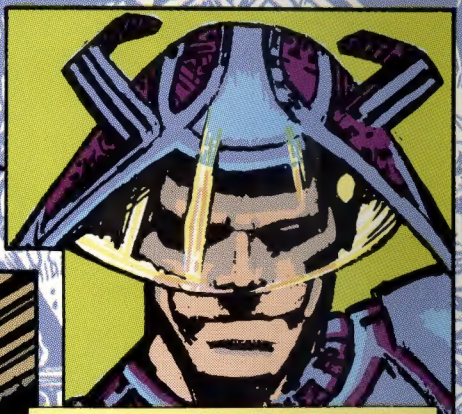

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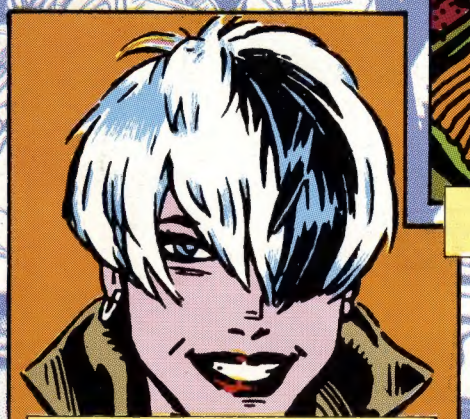

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